JERRY TODD AND THE OAK ISLAND TREASURE

BY LEO EDWARDS

YOUNKER'S
Des Moines
5C AE
5193
.50

THE JERRY TODD SERIES

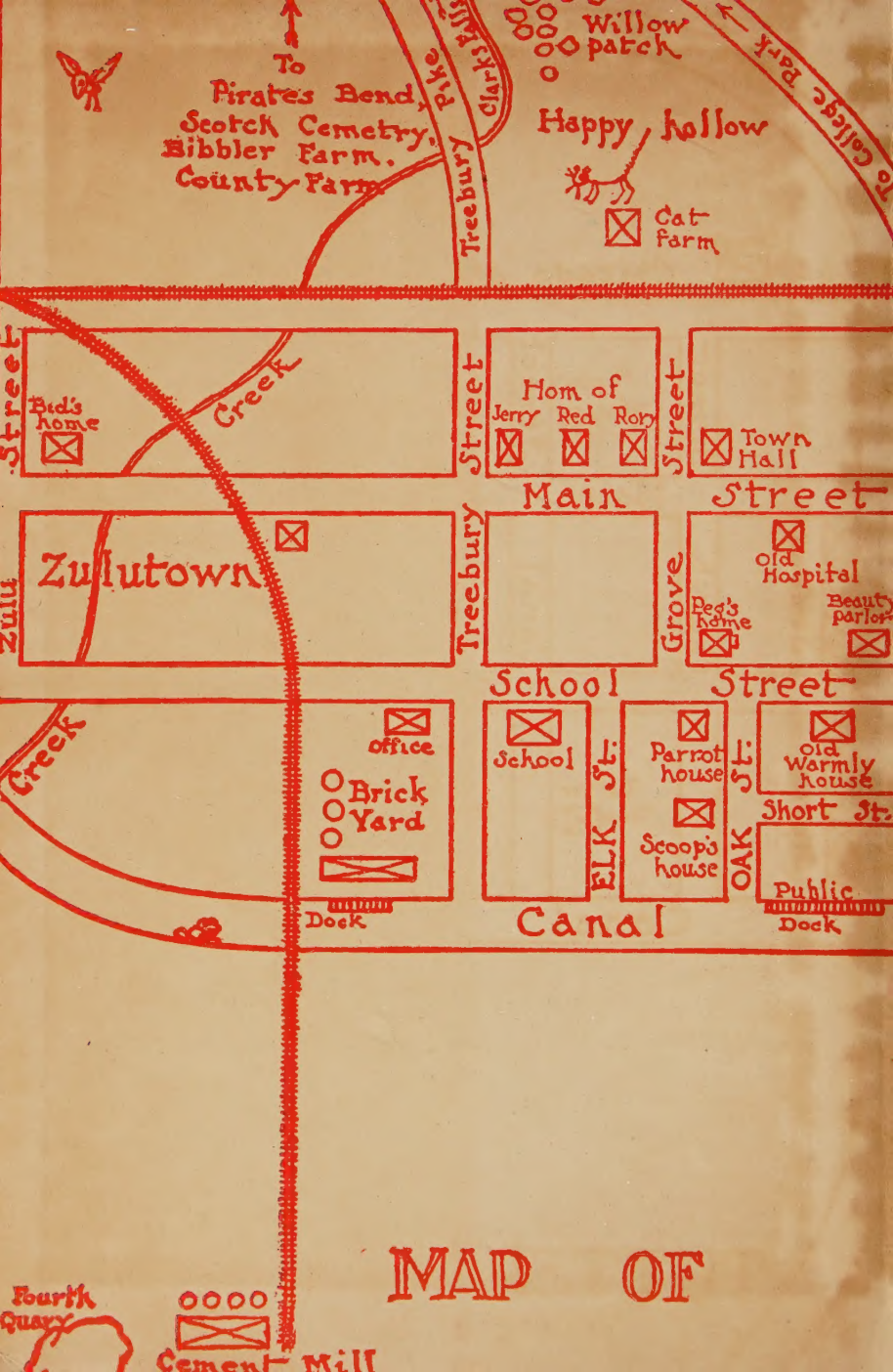
JERRY TODD AND THE OAK ISLAND TREASURE

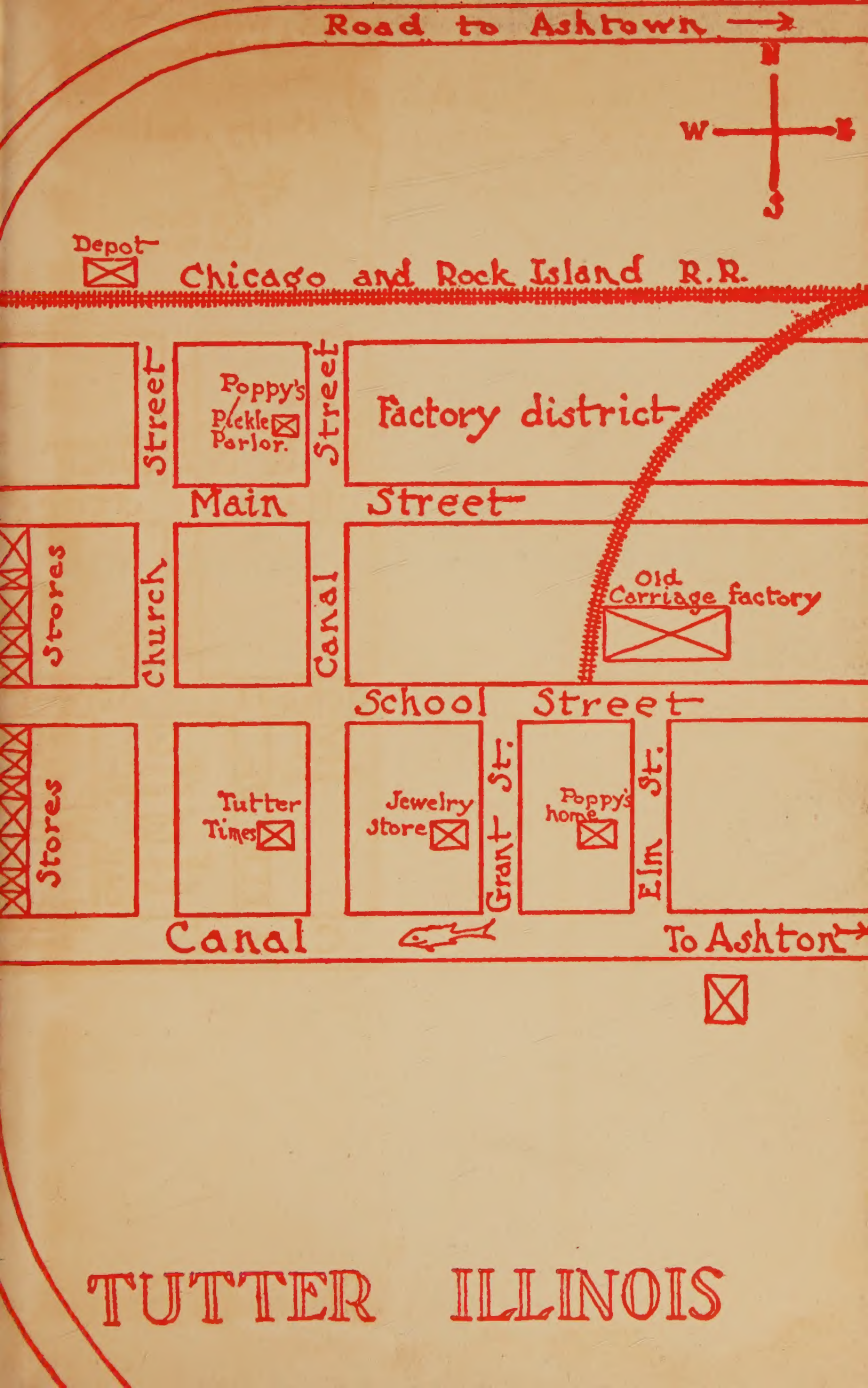
By LEO EDWARDS

Jerry Todd and his pals, Scoop, Red and Peg, set themselves up in the show business by transforming a disused clay scow of Mr. Todd's into a floating theatre. And a very wonderful show it is! Certainly it leads the boys into exceptional adventures.

Buried treasure, a lonely canal island alternately cloaked in the blackest darkness and the brightest moonlight, a mysterious piano leg, a crazy-acting talkative piano tuner, Mr. Capricorn Hebrides Windbigler—these are a few of the unusual high lights in this hilarious mystery-adventure story.

Jerry's enemy, the Stricker gang, try jealously to break up the successful boat show. But the "friendly ghost" helps the young showmen out. Is it a real ghost? Or is it some unknown man playing ghost? The story tells!


To
Pirates Bend
Scotch Cemetry
Bibbler Farm.
County Farm
Pike
Treebury
Clark's Falls
Willow patch
Happy Hollow
Cat farm
To College Park
Bid's home
Creek
Street
Hom of
Jerry Red Rory
Town Hall
Main Street
Zululutown
Zulu
Treebury
Grove
Old Hospital
Beauty parlor
Ped's home
School Street
Creek
office
Brick Yard
Dock
School
ELK St.
Parrot house
Scoop's house
OAK St.
Old Warmly House
Short St.
Public Dock
Canal
MAP OF
Fourth Quarry
Cement Mill


Road to Ashtown
N
W
E
S
Depot
Chicago and Rock Island R.R.
Street
Poppy's Pickle Parlor
Street
Factory district
Main Street
Stores
Church
Canal
Old Carriage factory
School Street
Stores
Tutter Times
Jewelry Store
Grant St.
Poppy's home
Elm St.
Canal
To Ashton
TUTTER ILLINOIS

JERRY TODD
AND THE OAK ISLAND TREASURE

"STOP IT!" SHE CRIED, HER FINGERS IN HER EARS.

Jerry Todd and the Oak Island Treasure. *Frontispiece—(Page 46)*

JERRY TODD
AND THE
OAK ISLAND TREASURE

BY

LEO EDWARDS

AUTHOR OF

THE JERRY TODD BOOKS, ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY

BERT SALG

GROSSET & DUNLAP

PUBLISHERS : : NEW YORK

Made in the United States of America

COPYRIGHT, 1925, BY
GROSSET & DUNLAP

JERRY TODD SAYS:

WHAT you will particularly like about this book, I believe, is our money-making canal-boat show. We fixed up Dad's old clay scow swell, with a stage and audience seats and everything. We even had a sort of "orchestra." Oh, boy! The way that old merry-go-round hand organ gurgled out its tunes when we twisted its tail! And the fun we had!

Scoop was the magician, advertised in the Tutter newspaper as the Great Kermann. Red was the ticket agent. Peg and I were officers of the show company and stage hands.

It was plain to us that we were going to make a wad of money giving black art shows. A million dollars, Scoop said, in fun. Peg said steadily that *he* would be satisfied with the price of a new bicycle. He got the bicycle, all right. But when you have read this story of fun and money-making and hidden mystery to its exciting final climax, you will say that he earned what he got . . . all of us, for that matter.

There is a new kind of ghost in this story. The Stricker gang, our enemy, tried jealously to

break up our show, but the "friendly ghost" helped us out. Was it a real ghost? Or was it some unknown man playing ghost? *We* didn't know.

Buried treasure, a lonely island, alternately cloaked in the blackest darkness and the brightest moonlight, a mysterious piano leg, a crazy-acting, talkative piano tuner—these are a few of the unusual high lights in an adventure story more exciting, I think, than my two earlier books, JERRY TODD AND THE WHISPERING MUMMY (Book No. 1) and JERRY TODD AND THE ROSE-COLORED CAT (Book No. 2); and as mysteriously bewildering as my later books, JERRY TODD AND THE WALTZING HEN (Book No. 4) and JERRY TODD AND THE TALKING FROG (Book No. 5).

Having read this story, treat yourself to some more hilarious fun with the "Whispering Mummy" book, a detective story that probably a million boys have laughed over. Mummy itch! Ever have it? *We* did.

In my "Rose-colored Cat" book we have our trials with a "feline rest farm"—a sort of sanitarium for wealthy people's cats. There is oodles of fun and a hundred and fifty crazy cats in this book, and a peculiar mystery of six vanished pink pearls.

In the "Waltzing Hen" book you'll meet old

Cap'n Tinkertop and his hilarious dancing leg. A funny old coot! Why does the hen waltz? What is the secret of the yellow man and the frisky white doorknob? Rip-roaring reading here.

In my "Talking Frog" book we help a boy pal save a peculiar invention of his father's from thieving hands. What is the shabby old soap peddler searching for, night after night, in the vanished miser's old mill? What does "ten and ten" mean? You'll search breathlessly for the answers to these and other riddles if you once get this gripping fun-mystery-adventure book into your hands.

Your friend,

JERRY TODD.

OUR CHATTER-BOX

THE earlier editions of this book did not contain a "Chatter-Box." But so popular has this department become (I started it with my sixteenth book) that my publisher asked me to prepare a brief "Chatter-Box" for all of my early books.

The boys and girls who read my books supply the material for this department. As the author of the books, all I have to do is to assemble the material. If you are one of the many hundreds of boys who have written to me, it may be that your letter was incorporated in the "Chatter-Box" in one of my other books. Writers of accepted poems receive, as a reward, a free autographed copy of the book in which their poem appears. The fine poems (all written by boys and girls who call themselves Jerry Todd fans) contained in the "Chatter-Boxes" in my recent books will interest you. But if you can't write poetry, built around the characters in my books, be sure and write me a letter. If you make your letter interesting I'll try hard to find a place for it in a future "Chatter-Box." I doubt if I could fully express the pleasure that I derive from the many letters that I receive. My boy pals! That is the way I regard the writers of these dandy letters. So the more letters I receive the more pals I'll have. And I sure like pals!

LETTERS

ONE day," writes Oswell Patout, Jr., of Jeanerette, La., "our gang (I'm enclosing a picture showing the three of us reading Jerry Todd books) began receiving mysterious maps and letters informing us about missing pearls. Here was a fine chance, we thought, to solve a mystery like Jerry Todd and his gang. So we set to work in regular Juvenile Jupiter Detective style. But, alas, the pearls were a fake. The letters and maps were a trick of boy

friends of ours who know how 'bugs' we are about your peachy books."

"I've made up my mind that I'm going to be a book writer like you," writes Charles Jordan of Chicago, Ill., "or at least try to be. If all men were like you it sure would be a swell world for us kids. I sure do appreciate your books. Yes, sir, I do. My cousin and I have tried many times to do things like Jerry. But what can a fellow do here in this big city! Boy, Jerry and his gang sure have peachy times, if you ask me. Whenever I read a Jerry Todd book I have the feeling that I'm right there, going through all the adventures the same as the other boys."

"I belong to a gang of Boy Scouts," writes Billy Johnston of Little Rock, Ark. "We have bully good times. One time we had a cave, to get into which we first had to raise a trapdoor and then crawl through a dark tunnel."

Boy, that sounds hot! And I'm reminded, too, of the cave that Trigger Berg and his pals built. Did you, Bill, like Trigger and his gang, catch a robber in your cave? This episode of Trigger's, I believe, took place in the *Treasure Tree* book.

And as though in answer to Bill's letter, Joe Griffith of Allegan, Mich., writes: "Our cave, built back of our barn, didn't last long. For a boy walked across the top and two boards fell on the kid's head who was inside. Ouch! I was glad it wasn't me."

Also from Allegan comes this interesting letter from Jack (Yam) Hale: "As the leader of our gang I am called Jerry Todd. Don Garlock is Peg. Zeb Jones is Scoop. And Si Herrington is Red. Having a raft with a big slingshot on it we frequently dress up like pirates, using wooden swords. Also we built a lean-to in the woods and made a totem pole—not so good, though, as the one in Poppy's book. Nor must I forget the 'Stricker gang' that we have battles with. That's the name we have for a rival gang near us. They're hard, like Bid."

Here's a joke (I think it's good, too) sent in by Emanuel Bernstein of Newark, N. J.:

Jerry: "It's only six o'clock. I told you to come over after supper."

Red: "That's what I came after."

Another boy — George Browne of Rye, N. Y.—submits this one:

Father, to little Tommie who had just started to school: "Well, son, what lesson do you like best?"

Tommie: "I like recess best."

And what do you think—Alfred Burke of Cranford, N. J., states that he has read the *Whispering Cave* book twenty-four times!

Here's another snappy one: "I tried to make a dinosaur egg," writes Jack Hanson of Rockford, Ill. Jack doesn't say how the egg turned out. Yet how glad we are that he didn't try to lay it!

"My chums and I recently organized a Juvenile Jupiter Detective Association," writes Wilfred Hinkel of Elmont, L. I., N. Y., "only we call ourselves the Jerry Todd Union of Detectives. Boy! You should see our peachy badges."

FRECKLED GOLDFISH

OUT of my book, *Poppy Ott and the Freckled Goldfish*, has grown our great Freckled Goldfish lodge, membership in which is open to all boys and girls who are interested in my books. Thousands of readers have joined the club. We have peachy membership cards (designed by Bert Salg, the popular illustrator of my books) and fancy buttons. Also for members who want to organize branch clubs (hundreds are in successful operation, providing boys and girls with added fun) we have rituals.

To join (and to be a loyal Jerry Todd fan I think you ought to join), please observe these simple rules:

(1) Write (or print) your name plainly.

(2) Supply your complete printed address.

(3) Give your age.

(4) Enclose two two-cent postage stamps (for card and button).

(5) Address your letter to

Leo Edwards,
Cambridge,
Wisconsin.

LOCAL CHAPTERS

TO HELP young organizers we have produced a printed ritual, which any member who wants to start a Freckled Goldfish club in his own neighborhood can't afford to be without. This booklet tells how to organize the club, how to conduct meetings, how to transact all club business, and, probably most important of all, how to initiate candidates.

The complete initiation is given word for word. Naturally, these booklets are more or less secret. So, if you send for one, please do not show it to anyone who isn't a Freckled Goldfish. Three chief officers will be required to put on the initiation, which can be given in any member's home, so, unless each officer is provided with a booklet, much memorizing will have to be done. The best plan is to have three booklets to a chapter. These may be secured (at cost) at six cents each (three two-cent stamps) or three for sixteen cents (eight two-cent stamps). Address all orders to

Leo Edwards,
Cambridge, Wisconsin.

CLUB NEWS

MY CHUMS and I," writes Charles Lewis of Conneaut, Ohio, "are all Freckled Goldfish. Calling our chapter the Freckled Fantails, we have secret rules, initiations and mysterious departments, such as Juvenile Jupiter Detectives and Secret and Mysterious Order of Humpty-Dumpty. Our password is——"

You've heard about club members being in good standing. Well, Frank Boyd of Dunellen, N. J., claims to be a member of our Freckled Goldfish lodge in good "sitting."

"I made some candy, like Andy Blake did in his book," writes Frank, "but even our dog Towser sniffed at it. Also, my chum and I made a kite ten feet high. It cost us fifteen cents. A stick broke when the kite got as high as a telephone pole, and that was the end of our fifteen cents."

Speaking of big kites, the new boys in *Andy Blake and the Pot of Gold* have a lot of fun with a huge kite. Andy himself is a young man; but the boys I refer to are quite young. Hence this story will be interesting to very small boys.

"Perhaps you'd be interested to know," writes Freckled Goldfish George Lindsay, Jr., of Philadelphia, Pa., "that my father manufactures food for goldfish."

Well, well! We're sure glad, George, to have such an authority in our ranks. If any of our Goldfish get the "tummy-ache" we'll turn them over to you for proper treatment.

"All of the boys around here are Freckled Goldfish," writes Thomas Keogh of Brooklyn, N. Y. "So I want to join, too. And here's a suggestion: You have Jerry Todd in the Poppy Ott books, so why don't you put Poppy in the Todd books? Also, tell me how many members there are in the Freckled Goldfish lodge. The *Bob-Tailed Elephant* book is the funniest thing I ever read."

By the time this "Chatter-Box" appears in print we will have not less than 8,000 members in our Goldfish lodge. As for your suggestion, both Scoop and Poppy are natural leaders. We don't need two leaders in a book. Nor would it be fair to push Poppy in front of Scoop in the Todd books. A better plan is to let Scoop do the leading in one series and Poppy in the other.

"I would like to organize a local chapter," writes Jim Gordon of Brooklyn, N. Y., "but there are not many boys around here. At the most I could get only five members. Please tell me if that would be enough. Also I would like to know if my dog can join. His name is Tramp."

If boys, conducting local chapters, want to include their pets in the chapter member-

ship it certainly is all right with me. It takes three boys to organize a chapter. Many of our chapters have only five members; some have less.

"Ed Nilsson, a Freckled Goldfish, and I are going to organize a local chapter," writes James Elphinstone of Ludlow, Mass. "We have used Ed's barn at other times for clubs. But we feel sure our Freckled Goldfish club will be the best of all. The trapdoor in the barn will come in handy during initiations! We have a pole in the old grain chute, extending from the attic to the cellar. We go down it like real firemen. I hope we don't share Red's grief and have a baby elephant cave in one side of our barn."

LEO'S PICTURE

AND now, gang, I have some news for you. An autographed picture of Leo Edwards—in person—may be obtained by writing to Leo Edwards' secretary, Grosset & Dunlap, 1140 Broadway, New York, N. Y., and enclosing ten cents in stamps to cover cost of handling. Modesty prevents me from telling you, fellows, that this is a rare bargain. Only ten cents for such a wonderful picture. Ahem!

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	The "Sally Ann"	1
II	The Enemy	10
III	A Whispering Ghost	18
IV	The Merry-go-round Organ	26
V	Taming the Hand Organ	42
VI	Under Power	48
VII	Our First Show	56
VIII	The Girl in the Blue Tam	68
IX	Under Arrest	83
X	The Greased Pig	93
XI	The Mystery That Came with the Night	106
XII	The Buried Treasure	113
XIII	Amazing News	123
XIV	Capricorn Hebrides Windbigler	137
XV	Under the Bed	153
XVI	The Secret of the Piano Leg	165
XVII	Back to the Island	182
XVIII	What the Turtle Did to Me	195
XIX	In the Cave	208
XX	The Mystery Clears	225

LEO EDWARDS' BOOKS

Here is a list of Leo Edward's published books:

THE JERRY TODD SERIES

JERRY TODD AND THE WHISPERING MUMMY
JERRY TODD AND THE ROSE-COLORED CAT
JERRY TODD AND THE OAK ISLAND TREASURE
JERRY TODD AND THE WALTZING HEN
JERRY TODD AND THE TALKING FROG
JERRY TODD AND THE PURRING EGG
JERRY TODD IN THE WHISPERING CAVE
JERRY TODD, PIRATE
JERRY TODD AND THE BOB-TAILED ELEPHANT
JERRY TODD, EDITOR-IN-GRIEF
JERRY TODD, CAVEMAN
JERRY TODD AND THE FLYING FLAPDOODLE
JERRY TODD AND THE BUFFALO BILL BATHTUB

THE POPPY OTT SERIES

POPPY OTT AND THE STUTTERING PARROT
POPPY OTT'S SEVEN-LEAGUE STILTS
POPPY OTT AND THE GALLOPING SNAIL
POPPY OTT'S PEDIGREED PICKLES
POPPY OTT AND THE FRECKLED GOLDFISH
POPPY OTT AND THE TITTERING TOTEM
POPPY OTT AND THE PRANCING PANCAKE
POPPY OTT HITS THE TRAIL

THE TUFFY BEAN SERIES

TUFFY BEAN'S PUPPY DAYS
TUFFY BEAN'S ONE-RING CIRCUS
TUFFY BEAN AT FUNNY-BONE FARM
TUFFY BEAN AND THE LOST FORTUNE

THE ANDY BLAKE SERIES

ANDY BLAKE
ANDY BLAKE'S COMET COASTER
ANDY BLAKE'S SECRET SERVICE
ANDY BLAKE AND THE POT OF GOLD

JERRY TODD AND THE OAK ISLAND TREASURE

CHAPTER I

THE "SALLY ANN"

It was summer vacation when this happened. We had been swimming in the fourth quarry and had stopped at Dad's brickyard canal dock on the way home.

Scoop Ellery, our leader, reached for a rock the size of his fist and sent it crash-bang! against the side of an old clay scow that was moored to the dock.

"If I had money enough," he grinned, "I'd buy that old tub and have some fun with it."

Red Meyers scratched his freckled nose.

"What kind of fun?" he wanted to know, wondering, I guess, what use one could make of the weather-beaten old scow.

"Well," considered Scoop, cocking his eyes at

the scow, "it would make a swell houseboat, for one thing."

"Let's do it," I promptly encouraged, picturing to myself the dandy fun that we could have in the Tutter canal with a houseboat. Hot dog! "Dad won't care," I hurried on. "Honest. For he told me that he was going to drag the scow out of the water and knock it to pieces."

Here Peg Shaw, our big chum, came into the conversation.

"If your pa'll let us use it," he said to me, with an ear-to-ear grin, "I know how we can earn some money with it."

Well, that sounded darby. For boys like to earn money. And if we could have fun doing it, as seemed very probable, so much the better.

Then Peg told us that it was his scheme to get up a boat show, patterned after the boat shows that used to travel on the Mississippi River years ago, only, of course, our show was to be a small one as compared to the early river shows. We could easily make the audience seats, our chum explained in reciting his scheme, and build a stage at one end of the boat.

Red wanted to give a picture show.

"I've got a peachy moving picture machine," he told us.

"What's the matter with our black art show?" Scoop suggested.

"The black art show," Peg said, waggling, "is what I had in mind."

"Oh, baby!" I cried. "Won't we have fun?"

Scoop had been studying sleight of hand tricks and his book of instructions told how to stage an amateur black art show. Black art is a good magic trick. Anybody can do it, as I will explain later on in my story. In June we put on the show in Red's barn. It was fun. We took in ninety-five cents, which was pretty good for the first time. If Peg, the big cow, hadn't stumbled over a lantern, thereby setting fire to one of Mrs. Meyers' sheets that we were using on the stage, we probably would have made a lot of money giving black art shows. But we had to go out of the show business when Mr. Meyers put a padlock on the barn door.

Now we were going to be showmen again! We were glad. The more we talked about the boat show scheme the better we liked it. In the first place it was *different*. People who had laughed at our barn show, calling it a kid affair, would be interested in our boat show. And we wouldn't have any competition, because we would be the owners of the only flat-bottomed boat in town.

Other boys might envy us, but they wouldn't be able to take any of our business away from us by starting a rival boat show. Certain of success, we were eager to begin. But first I had to gain Dad's consent.

The old clay scow is a part of his brickyard outfit. I guess it was built years and years before I was born. Anyway, I remember it as one of the first things in the brickyard that drew my attention. I was sorry when they quit using it. For it was fun to ride up the shady canal to the clay pit and back again to the factory where the clay was made into bricks. It took two men to manage the scow when it was in use. One man drove the team of mules that did the towing and the other man handled the big rudder, thereby keeping the loaded scow in the canal's channel. As you can imagine it was rather slow traveling, for the mules never moved faster than a walk; but, as I say, it was fun nevertheless.

Nowadays all of Dad's clay comes into the brickyard on big motor trucks. And it was because he had no use for the scow that he had told me that he was going to knock it to pieces.

That evening at the supper table I told my folks about our swell show scheme. They laughed.

"What won't you and that Ellery boy think up next!" Mother said.

"It's a dandy scheme," I told her. "We'll make a lot of money. It'll be fun, too."

"I only hope," she said, when I had gotten permission to use the old scow, "that the boat won't spring a leak and sink in the middle of the canal during one of your shows."

"No danger of that," laughed Dad, who knew how well built the scow was. He caught my eyes. "Did I understand you to say," he quizzed across the table, "that it's going to be a magic show?"

"The same as we put on in Red's barn," I nodded.

"Who's the magician?—Scoop?"

I gave another nod.

"He's also the general manager of our show company," I informed.

Mother smiled.

"What are you," she inquired in fun, "the traffic manager?"

I told her, with dignity, that I was the treasurer, which was a very important and trustworthy position, and handled the money.

"Peg's the secretary," I further informed, "and Red's the ticket agent."

Dad considered.

"How would it be," he suggested, starting his nonsense, "if you put on a trapeze act? Mother and I are crazy to get our names on the program; and trapeze stuff is our specialty."

"The very idea!" sputtered Mother, who knew, of course, that Dad was trying to bother her. He likes to tease people. I'll tell the world that I get my share of it!

After supper I picked up Red and the two of us went in search of Peg and Scoop to tell them the good news that the scow was ours. They were at Peg's house, where Scoop was importantly lettering a fancy cloth sign. Here it is:

THE "SALLY ANN" SHOW COMPANY
Mystery and Magic
To-night at 8:30
Admission, Including War Tax, 15c.
Children 10c.

Red hates girls.

"Who's 'Sally Ann'?" he scowled, letting out his freckled neck at the sign.

Scoop quickly read the other's thoughts.

"You'll like Sal," he grinned.

"If you're going to have a gurl in it," Red balked, "you can count me out," and he hitched up his pants and started off.

"Hey; come here!"

"Nothin' doin'."

" 'Sally Ann,' " laughed Scoop, "is the name of our show boat."

Red gave a disgusted snort.

"Named after a gurl! Huh! Why don't you name it after a boy?"

"A boat," explained Scoop, "is usually a 'she.' Anyway," he defended, " 'Sally Ann' is a good name. I've got it printed that way and I'm not going to change it."

Like Red, I didn't think very much of our leader's choice of a name for our show boat. But I kept shut. For you can't argue Scoop down.

"I'm going to make two of these signs," he explained to us. "One for each side of the boat. I can finish the job to-night. And to-morrow we'll put up the stage and build the seats."

"Hot dog!" I cried, thinking of the fun we were going to have.

"It will take a lot of coin to get started," he went on, "so we better check up and find out how we stand on the money question. I can put in seven dollars." He looked at me. "How much are you good for, Jerry?"

I knew that I could depend on Dad and Mother to help me out. It would be a loan, sort of.

Later on, when the show was earning money, I could pay them back out of my share of the profits.

"I'll bring ten dollars to-morrow morning," I told our leader.

"So will I," promised Red, who has more truck than any other kid in Tutter. If he took a sudden notion to start a circus all he would have to do would be to whistle and his folks would stock him up with a baby elephant and a flock of camels.

Peg was silent.

"I don't like to ask Pa for money," he finally spoke up. "For he has to work hard for what he gets. If I could sell some of my rabbits . . ."

"Don't sell the white one," grinned Scoop, "for we need it in our act. Remember?—I wave the magic wand over the empty teacup and out jumps a white rabbit."

"Tommy Hegan wants to buy a pair of rabbits," I told Peg, who promised to call on the Grove Street kid the first thing in the morning.

Scoop was adding in his mind.

"If you can get three dollars," he told Peg, "we'll have an even thirty. That ought to be enough to start with."

"Thirty dollars," repeated Red, thinking of his stomach. "That will buy—um—three hundred

ten-cent dishes of ice ceam; or six hundred ice-cream cones; or three thousand penny sticks of licorice; or——"

Scoop gave the hungry one a contemptuous up-and-down look.

"Good-night!" he groaned, throwing up his hands. "It's a hopeless case."

Red grinned. For he likes to get Scoop's goat.

"I can't work," he strutted around, holding his freckled nose in the air, "if I can't eat. And if you expect me to put in ten dollars——"

"Your ten dollars is an *investment,*" explained Scoop, who has learned a lot about business from his father. "It gives you a quarter interest in the company." He paused, then added with a grin: "If we take in a million dollars, you get a quarter of it."

"I'll be satisfied," Peg spoke up in his sensible way, "if we make a hundred dollars . . . twenty-five dollars apiece. I've been wanting a bicycle."

"You and me both," I put in.

"Well," grinned Scoop, "it's a bit unlikely that we'll get to be millionaires. Still, you never can tell."

CHAPTER II

THE ENEMY

BEFORE I go any deeper into my story I will tell you about our canal, for you will need this information to thoroughly understand what follows.

We call it the Tutter canal, for the reason that it runs through our small town. Over in Ashton, a neighboring small town, the kids call it the Ashton canal. It is a hundred miles long, I guess. Maybe longer. It was built by the state to connect the great lakes with the Gulf of Mexico through the Illinois River and the Mississippi River.

It isn't more than forty feet wide where it passes through Tutter. One bank forms a tow path, which was necessary when the canal was new because in those olden days all of the grain boats were drawn by horses and mules. To-day the few boats that come through Tutter are drawn by smoky tugs.

In the same way that a single-track railroad has

sidings that permit trains traveling in opposite directions to pass each other, our canal has "wide waters," where the canal boats meet and pass. There is a wide waters below Tutter and another one between our town and Ashton. The biggest wide waters that I have seen is the one between Ashton and Steam Corners. Here the canal is more than a mile wide, a sort of lake, though the water for the most part is shallow, with a mud bottom. The channel is marked with parallel rows of piles painted white.

Dad says that before the canal was built the Oak Island wide waters was a swamp and the island that I am going to tell you about in my story was a rocky knoll. Of its many trees the largest one is an oak, which grows on the island's highest point, and it is this noticeable oak that gained for the island its name.

Well, to get back to my story, we met at Scoop's father's grocery store the following morning, no less enthused over our scheme than we had been the preceding evening, each one supplied with his promised share of the new company's working capital. As treasurer the money was turned over to me. I felt pretty big to have so much money in my pocket. And I sort of held my chest out as I hurried with the others to the

brickyard dock to begin work on our show boat.

Having been built purposely for clay hauling, the flat-bottomed scow was mostly pit, with a deck at each square end. These decks were small, not more than fourteen feet wide (the width of the scow) by four feet deep, but we figured that we could build our stage on the front deck and have plenty of room. The audience seats were to be built in the pit. Such were our plans. And anxious to get everything in readiness, so that we could give our first show and begin earning money, we set to work.

There was a lot of old lumber in the brickyard. Dad said we could sort it over and use what pieces we needed if we would promise to bring the lumber back when we retired, wealthy, from the show business. We promised. And lugging the necessary material to the dock we sawed and nailed until we had the pit filled with benches. It was tiresome work, but we didn't mind that. For a boy doesn't mind working hard and getting slivers in his fingers when he is working for himself.

It took us all of the morning to make the seats. Before we could build the stage, the next important job, we had to get our painted canvas, which was stored in Red's barn. We had other

stuff, too, that we had used in our barn show; and, as it was too heavy to lug, Scoop borrowed one of his father's delivery wagons.

We put in the best part of the afternoon working on the stage. It was a big job. First we built a framework for the lights, and back of that we fixed canvas wings, painted black, with a black canvas at the back and a black floor piece. Lacking the necessary material, we were unable to cover the stage and the seats. If it rained everything would get soaked. But we couldn't help that.

"Now," said Scoop, directing the work, "we'll build a ticket stand, and when that job is done we'll call it a day and quit."

Peg straightened and looked around, sort of checking up on our work.

"Seats made—stage built—ticket stand won't take more than an hour." He looked at us in turn. "Fellows, we ought to be able to open up for business to-morrow night. What do you think?"

"Easy," I said.

While we were working on the ticket stand a gang of five boys our age came into sight.

"What yo' doin'?" Bid Stricker wanted to know from the dock.

We don't like the Strickers for two cents. They're a bunch of roughnecks. All they ever want to do is to fight and play mean tricks on people. We don't believe in that. And because we won't gang with them, and do the mean things they do, they have it in for us.

"Beat it," growled Scoop, motioning the unwelcome newcomers away.

But they didn't budge.

"Must be some kind of a show," Bid hung on, letting out his neck at the stage and seats.

"Tell them," I nudged our leader. "Maybe we can get some money out of them."

"Yes," Scoop told the inquisitive ones, following my advice, "we're going to give a show. Ten cents for kids. And it's a peachy show, too. You fellows want to come and see it. You'll be sorry if you miss it."

"What kind of a show?" Bid inquired.

"Magic."

"Who's the magician?"

"Me," Scoop informed modestly, putting out his chest.

Bid's cousin gave a scornful laugh.

"A punk show, I bet."

"Punk is right," another member of the gang

chimed in. "Look at the punk seats," the jealous one pointed. "*Some* carpenters!"

"Wood butchers," jeered Jimmy Stricker.

"And look at the punk stage."

That made us hot. For we were proud of our work, as we had a right to be. And, with Peg in the lead, we took after the smart alecks and chased them away.

"We'll fix your old show," Bid yelled back.

"Try it," dared Peg, "and see what happens to you."

We went back to the show boat.

"Now that they know what we're doing," Peg said, wiping his sweaty face on his shirt sleeve, "they won't rest easy until they've smashed up something. For you know Bid Stricker! And you heard what he said. If he gets half a chance he'll put us out of business, just as sure as shootin'. We've got to be prepared, fellows."

"I wouldn't put it past him," growled Scoop, "to bore a hole in the bottom of our boat and sink it. He'd think it was smart to do a stunt like that."

"It'll pay us," waggled Peg, "to keep a close eye on our truck after this."

"Aw! . . ." rebelled Red, scowling, when it

was suggested that we guard the show boat day and night. "I don't want to stay here all the time. I've got to eat."

"We'll work in pairs," planned Peg, disregarding the smaller one's objection. "Jerry and I will stand guard to-night and you two fellows can stand guard to-morrow night."

Scoop laughed.

"What's the matter, Red? You look sort of white under your freckles. Are you scared?"

"I have a hunch," worried Red, looking ahead, "that I'm going to end up with a black eye or a punch in the jaw. For what chance has two fellows got against five?"

I had thought of that.

"Maybe we better stick together," I suggested, getting Peg's eyes.

But he wasn't worried like me.

"Five o'clock," he told us, looking at his watch.

"We'll have to snap into it," Scoop said, "if we expect to finish the ticket stand to-day."

"You fellows can work on it," Peg directed, "while Jerry and I go home for our bedding. For, if we're going to stay here to-night, we've got to have something to sleep on. Come on, Jerry."

Peg is big and strong and awfully gritty. He

isn't afraid of anybody or anything. I'm pretty gritty myself. I don't run when a bigger fellow starts picking on me.

But, truthfully, I didn't like this "two-against-five" business. It was risky. And I told Peg so on the way home.

He patted me on the back, grinning.

"Cheer up, Jerry. I've got a scheme."

CHAPTER III

A WHISPERING GHOST

It was dark as pitch. The moon and stars were hidden behind a black wall. I couldn't see a thing —not even my hand when I held it within an inch of my nose.

A breeze had sprung up as the day had died and the darkness had crept in. From where I lay on the stage of our show boat, wrapped in my blanket, the breeze fanning my face, I could hear the steady lap! lap! lap! of the canal's waves as they hungrily licked the boat's flat nose.

In preparing for a possible night attack, Peg and I had anchored the scow in the middle of the canal. This gave us an advantage over the enemy, even though we were fewer in numbers. If they tried to run a plank from the dock to the scow, we could easily knock the plank into the canal before they could make use of it. Or, if they came in a rowboat, we could force them back, using our clubs, if necessary.

It was pretty smart of Peg to think up this scheme, I thought.

The agreement had been made between us that we were to watch in turns. This would enable each of us to get some needed sleep. I was to rest an hour while my companion watched, then he was to sleep while I watched. The trouble was that I couldn't get to sleep when it was my turn to rest. The thought of our coming success as showman, the thought of a possible night attack by the enemy, kept me awake.

There was a sudden rumbling crash on the roof of the sky.

"Jerry," Peg whispered out of the darkness, and I heard his quick, guarded footsteps.

"Yes?" I breathed, getting to my feet in the sudden tense thought that the Strickers had come.

"It's going to rain."

"Oh! . . ." I lost my sudden tenseness and started breathing again. "Put up your umbrella," I joked.

"I wish I had one. Our bedding will get soaked."

"You seem to overlook the fact," I laughed, "that this is a regular boat."

"Huh!"

"And every regular boat," I went on, "has a cabin."

"What do you mean?"

"There's a hatchway in the other deck."

"Crickets! I never thought of that."

Using a flashlight to light our way, we went quickly to the rear deck and raised the hinged hatch, which was fitted with a hasp and pin.

There wasn't much space under the deck. But it was better to squeeze, I told Peg, than to get soaked. So we shoved our bedding into the hole, where tools such as shovels and picks had been kept under padlock when the scow had been used for clay hauling.

Peg crept into the hole, flashing the light ahead of him.

"What if the Strickers come?"

"They won't come in the rain," I predicted.

"I saw them just before dark."

"In the brickyard?"

"Sure thing. They were watching us."

"We're safe from them now."

"I hope so." He laughed. "Well, here's hoping that our cabin roof doesn't leak."

"If it does," I joked, following him into the hole, "we'll have it shingled to-morrow."

"Ouch!" cried my big chum, bumping his head against a deck beam. "Bend your back, Jerry. This is worse than crawling under a barn."

Pretty soon we were settled in our blankets. It was pouring now. The wind was blowing a gale. I could feel the *Sally Ann* tugging at the anchor ropes.

Would our stage be blown down? I sort of counted the seconds, worried-like, expecting any moment to hear a crash. But none came. And after a bit the wind died down.

"Hum-m-m-m!" yawned Peg, stretching in the dark and swatting me on the nose. I told him to cut it out.

Patter! patter! patter! There was lulling music in the dancing raindrops. A sleepy feeling crept over me. I was glad in the moment that it was Peg's turn to watch. I closed my eyes. And then . . .

I must have slept for more than an hour. Anyway, when I awoke there was no sound of raindrops on the deck above my face. The storm had passed over. Through a crack I could see a shimmering star.

Something had awakened me. Suddenly. I had a frightened, jumpy feeling. I rubbed my eyes, trying to remember what I had dreamt. *A ghost!* That was it. I had dreamt of a whispering ghost.

What was that? I listened, breathless, raising

myself on my hands. My heart was thumping. Footsteps. Near by. Guarded and stealthy.

"Nobody here," a low voice spoke up. "They must have gone home."

It was the Strickers! The enemy had outtricked us—had caught us napping and now were in possession of our boat. I went cold, sort of, in the knowledge of our humiliating predicament.

Peg was still asleep. I could hear him snoring. I shook him, telling him to wake up. In my sudden crazy excitement I completely forgot about the beams over my head. Raising quickly, I got an awful bump on the forehead. It sort of knocked me silly.

"Oh-h-h-h!" I groaned, falling back.

There was a sudden silence.

"I heard a voice," breathed Jimmy Stricker.

"Me, too," another boy spoke up.

"Under the stage."

A slit of light, from a flashlight, appeared in the crack through which the star had been visible to me in the moment of my awakening.

"Look! Here's a hatch."

"Raise it," commanded Bid. "I've got a club. And if a head comes up I'll whack it."

The hatch was raised cautiously . . . a light flashed into my blinking eyes.

"It's them!" cried Bid. "Close it—*quick!*"

Bang! went the hatch.

"Lock it!" cried Bid.

Peg stirred at the slamming of the hatch.

"What the dickens? . . ." he mumbled, awakening. "I must have been asleep." He shook me. "Did you hear that loud thunder clap, Jerry? It woke me up."

I was dizzy. My head ached. But I was able to think and to talk.

"It wasn't thunder," I told him. "It was the Strickers. They've captured our boat. We're locked in."

He gave a queer choking throat sound and started to get up.

"Ouch!" he cried, bumping his head.

"Two monkeys in a cage," yipped Bid Stricker.

"Open that hatch," roared Peg, furious.

"Listen!" screeched Bid. "One of the monkeys can talk. Just like a human bein'."

"I'll 'human bein' ' you," threatened Peg, "if you don't let us out of here. You know me, Bid!"

"Beg some more," jeered Bid. "We like it."

Well, I can't begin to tell you how awful we felt. We are pretty smart. We think that we are a lot smarter than the Strickers. It was gall-

ing to us therefore to have them get the upper hand of us. And we were further sickened in the thought that they would throw our stage and seats into the canal. Our day's work would be for nothing. But what could we do to defend our property? Not a thing. We were helpless—trapped like rats in a wire cage.

Suddenly a shrill scream pierced our ears.

"Oh! . . ." cried Bid, and there was unmistakable fear in his voice. *"Oh! . . ."*

There was a scurry of feet . . . the sound of diminishing gasping voices . . . silence.

And all this, mind you, when we had expected to hear the sound of ripping stage boards!

"They're running away," cried Peg, bewildered in the unexpected turn of affairs.

"Let us out," I screeched, pounding on the hatch in the hope that the enemy would return and release us.

And now comes the weird part of my story—the beginning of the mystery.

"Where . . . are . . . you?"

The voice came from the other side of the hatch, a peculiar whispering voice.

"We're under the deck," cried Peg. "We're locked in. Let us out. Please."

I suddenly clutched my chum's arm.

"No!" I cried, in a panic of fear. "No!"

"What's the matter, Jerry?"

"It's a ghost," I cried, crazy. "I saw it in my dream. I heard it. It's a whispering ghost. Don't let it in."

"Ghost? You're batty."

With these grunted words my companion lifted the hatch, which had been unlatched by the unseen whisperer. And unwilling to be left alone, I followed him through the hole.

The moon was shining. We could see every part of the boat. A plank was laid from the dock to the scow. Here was the course that the invaders had taken in their tumbling, panicky flight.

But the Strickers were nowhere in sight. No one was in sight.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" gasped Peg, dumfounded.

CHAPTER IV

THE MERRY-GO-ROUND ORGAN

Scoop was on hand the following morning at five o'clock. Peg and I were glad to see him. For our stomachs were empty and we wanted to go home to breakfast.

But before we left for home we told the industrious early-riser about our weird experience. At first he refused to take our story seriously. It was a crazy dream, he ridiculed.

Peg soberly shook his head.

"No, it wasn't a dream. For we both were wide awake. Jerry declares it was a whispering ghost that visited us. And maybe he's right. I can't say that it wasn't a ghost. Certainly it acted queer enough to be one."

"I don't believe in ghosts," boasted Scoop.

"Neither did I," I shot back at him, looking him straight in the eye, "until last night."

"A ghost! You're funny, Jerry."

"All my life," I followed up, waggling, "I've carried in my mind a sort of idea of what a ghost's voice would be like, *if* there was such a

thing as a ghost. And twice last night I heard exactly that kind of a voice."

"It *was* a queer voice," Peg told Scoop, serious. "Sort of hollow, like a whisper in a dark tomb."

"Jinks! If you fellows keep on talking about tombs, backing each other up in your crazy story, you'll have me actually believing that your visitor *was* a ghost."

"If it wasn't a ghost," I said, to a good point, "why did the Strickers scream and run away?"

"The Strickers are likely to do anything."

"They wouldn't have been afraid of a man."

"Maybe," Scoop grinned, keeping up the argument, "the man had a gun or a sword."

"Bunk!" I grunted, disgusted with the arguer, who is never so happy as when he is trying, superior-like, to talk some one else down. "They saw a ghost," I waggled, "and nothing else but."

My stiff attitude seemed to amuse the other.

"All right," he nodded. "Have it your own way. It was a ghost, as you say. And what *is* a ghost? A supernatural thing, if we are to believe the crazy stories that we have heard. And, being supernatural, a ghost, of course, knows everything. It doesn't have to ask questions. It *knows* what it wants to know without asking. Isn't that right?"

I nodded.

"All right!" he came back quickly, a snappier sparkle in his eyes. "If this visitor of yours was a ghost, as you declare, why did it *ask* you where you were? Explain that, if you can."

Peg scratched his head and squinted at me.

"That's a good argument, Jerry."

But I wasn't going to back down and let the smart one have everything his own way.

"Huh!" I said, standing by my belief.

Scoop was still grinning, contented, I imagine, in the thought of how very smart he was!

"As I say," he went on, "I don't believe in ghosts, and consequently I don't know very much about them. But from what I've heard, I have the impression that a ghost is sort of unfriendly. Of a mean disposition, it delights to sneak up on people. And the more people it scares into fits, the merrier for it. That is *my* idea of a ghost. Yet, if I am to believe your story, *this* ghost did you a good turn."

"A friendly ghost," grinned Peg, amused in the thought. "Haw! haw! haw!" he burst out, in his rough way. "It isn't every company of showmen with a friendly ghost on their side. We're lucky."

At Scoop's request I repeated my dream.

"I was in a cave," I told him. "It was dark. Like the inside of a cistern at midnight. I could feel something near me. A sort of invisible thing. Then I heard a low, whispering voice. 'Where . . . are . . . you?' I couldn't see a thing, as I say. But somehow I knew that it was a ghost that was whispering to me. 'Where . . . are . . . you?' it breathed again. I wanted to run away. But I couldn't move. I was scared stiff. A sort of paralysis. Every second I expected to feel the pressure of its cold hand on mine. Ough! I was full of shivers. Then, sudden-like, I was wide awake."

"And the voice that you heard after the Strickers had gone was the same voice that you heard in your dream?"

I nodded.

"Not only the same voice," I told him, "but the same words."

He was puzzled.

"I've been told," he said, thinking, "that dreams happen in a flash. And I guess it's so. For one night when it was storming Mother came into my bedroom to close my window. The creaking of the window pulleys sort of registered in my sleeping mind. And I had a long, crazy dream about burglars. To have done what I did in the

dream would have taken an hour or more. Yet it all happened in an instant."

"If that is the case," I reasoned out, "I must have heard the whispering voice in my sleep."

"It was the whispering voice," the leader declared, coming to a quick conclusion, "that caused you to dream of the ghost."

"What?" cried Peg, surprised. "Do you mean to say that Jerry heard the whispering voice *before* the Strickers came?"

Scoop nodded, sure of himself.

"I can't understand it," cried Peg, looking dizzy. "Why should a man mysteriously board our boat in the middle of the night? What object could he have had? Who was he? Why did he whisper to us, asking where we were? And where did he vanish to?"

"It was a ghost," I hung on.

Scoop laughed.

"Let it be a ghost, if you insist. We should worry, as long as it's a friendly ghost."

Peg was struggling, in his slow, steady way, to get his thoughts straightened out.

"But if the man was here in advance of the Strickers, as you say, how did he get on the boat? There was no plank then."

"You and Jerry ought to know more about that

than any one else," shrugged Scoop, "for you were here when it happened." Then he added, in a lighter voice: "But let's forget about your mysterious whisperer for the present. If there's a mystery here, we probably can solve it to-night."

"You think the man will come back?"

"It isn't unlikely."

Peg's black eyes snapped.

"Gosh! I wish it was my turn to watch."

"I imagine," laughed Scoop, "that Red will be tickled pink to let you have his place."

"Where is Red?" I spoke up, thus reminded of our absent chum. "Why didn't you bring him with you?"

"What? Get that sleepy-head out of bed before eight o'clock? You must think I know how to work miracles, Jerry."

"I'll stop for him on my way back," I said, starting off abreast of Peg.

"Make it snappy," Scoop told us. "For there's a million things to do before we can open up our show." Then he called after us, laughing: "Don't forget to look on the front page of last night's *Daily Globe* when you get home."

Peg and I wondered at this remark. And to find out what the leader meant, we quickened our steps toward home. I grabbed the newspaper

as soon as I was in the house. And here is the heading that met my eager eyes on the front page:

CLAY SCOW TRANSFORMED BY LOCAL BOYS INTO FLOATING THEATER

Giving our names, the newspaper article stated that we had transformed the old brickyard clay scow into a fine floating theater, with a stage and seats, and were planning to give black art shows, an attraction that undoubtedly would prove popular with both old and young.

"So, why should we care," the article concluded, in nonsense, "if Ashton has the new county jail? For *we* have the *Sally Ann!* And our only editorial regret is that our enterprising young showmen haven't a motor on their unique craft, for we would delight to have them toot their show horn at Ashton's canal door, to thus awaken that somnolent community to Tutter's exceptional enterprise. In Tutter, the town that does things, we start young!"

Well, I stared at the concluding paragraph, reading it a second time. "And our only editorial regret is that our enterprising young showmen haven't a motor . . ."

Jinks! Smart as we were, we hadn't thought of that. But wouldn't it be peachy, though? And think of the money we could make! For if we got as far as Ashton with our show, what was there to hinder us from going farther?

Gobbling down my breakfast, with Mother scolding me for eating so fast, I hoofed it to the brickyard dock, forgetting all about my promise to stop for Red.

"Did you put the article in the newspaper?" I asked Scoop.

He nodded.

"Pa suggested it. 'Go over and tell Editor Stair about your new boat show,' he told me yesterday noon. 'Make him publish the story in his newspaper. He gets a lot of money out of me for store advertising. So, as a member of the family, you're entitled to all the publicity that you can get.' "

" 'Publicity,' " I repeated. "What's that?"

"The article that you just read in the newspaper is publicity. It tells the Tutter people about our show in a news way. That's publicity, Pa says."

"It's advertising," I said.

"Publicity and advertising are much the same thing. Only, as I understand it, you get publicity

for nothing and you pay for advertising. By the way, Jerry, I told Mr. Stair that we would put an advertisement in his newspaper when we got ready to open up our show. Don't let me forget about it. We've got to order tickets, too."

"Why not get some more publicity," I suggested, eager to hang on to our thirty dollars, "and let the advertising go. It'll be cheaper for us."

"We need advertising and publicity both," Scoop waggled. "What we want to do, to make a success of our show," he added, businesslike, "is to get everybody in town to talking about us. And to do that we've got to advertise, and we've got to have the newspaper further recognize us and print more news about us. *Publicity* news. A lot of people will laugh at the idea of four boys starting a boat show, and maybe they won't pay any attention to us at the start. But after a day or two, knowing that we are still in business, they'll begin to wonder if our show isn't of some account after all. They'll get curious to see it. And then, when they come to the boat to satisfy their curiosity, we'll get their money. See?"

I had to admit to myself that Scoop was pretty smart.

"Wouldn't it be darby," I said, "if we could

hitch an engine to our boat, as the newspaper says. We could ride our audience up the canal, instead of giving our show here at the dock."

Scoop scratched his head.

"That would be a slick stunt."

"Let's do it," I urged.

"Where are we going to get the necessary engine?"

"The junk yard," I told him, "is full of old auto engines. For the biggest part of Mr. Solbeam's business is junking cars. Tommy Hegan bought an engine from him for ten dollars. It runs, too."

Determined, on more lengthy conversation, in which our other two chums took part, to see what we could do in the way of supplying our show boat with an engine, Scoop and I and Red went to the junk yard, leaving Peg on guard at the dock. As I had told Scoop, there were dozens of old auto engines in the yard. We looked them over, picking out the one that we wanted. Then we had a talk with the proprietor.

"Ya," he said, working his shoulders and screwing up his hairy face, "I sell heem vor a ten dollah. O, ya, ya," he flourished, "heem vork. Fine, fine. An' a beeg bargain, boys; a beeg bargain."

Scoop looked around the cluttered junk yard.

"What'll you give us," he asked, to a point, "if we straighten up this mess for you?"

"Vot's dat?"

"We'll work for you for the rest of the day, the three of us, if you'll sell us the engine for three dollars. Is it a deal?"

The junk man scowled. I thought at first that he was going to order us out of the yard. But I was to learn that scowling was just a trick of his. He had to scowl and work his shoulders and flourish his hands in order to talk business.

"I tell you vot, boys, you vork it two days an' not vun day an' I sell you heem vor dree dollahs."

"No," waggled Scoop, who realized that the other was trying to get the big end of the bargain.

The junk man next offered the engine to us for one day's work and five dollars.

"No," Scoop said again. "We made you our offer. You can take it or leave it."

"Vell," shrugged the junk man, with a trace of a grin on his face, "you gif me da dree dollahs, an' with da day's vork ve vill call it a deal."

Cleaning up that junk yard was the hardest work I ever did. And as I tugged and lugged I told myself that when I grew up the one thing

that I wasn't going to be was a junk wrestler. By ten o'clock my arms were so lame that it pained me to lift them. I couldn't step around half as briskly as I had done at the start. I suggested to the other fellows, who were equally as tired as I was, that we better stop and rest. And with Mr. Solbeam's consent we sent Red home for some sandwiches and doughnuts.

I was glad when the noon whistles blew. As I hurried into the street Dad drove by in our auto, stopping at my signal.

"I never saw you look any dirtier," he grinned, "so you ought to be happy."

I told him what I had been doing.

"Hard work, hey?" and he looked at me sort of warm-like.

"I'll tell the world it's hard work," Red piped up from the back of the car, where he was stretched full length on the seat.

"Well," grinned Dad, "anything worth having is worth working for." After which little sermon he inquired how the show business was coming along, asking particularly if we had received any congratulatory professional telegrams from P. T. Barnum or Al Ringling.

We would soon open up for business, I told him, paying no attention to his nonsense about the

telegrams. Our big job now, I explained, was to get the engine to working and rig up some kind of a propeller.

"I suppose you're incorporated," he said, further joshing me.

"Ask Scoop," I grinned. "He's the manager."

"Well, I hope that he proves to be a better manager than he did the night that he had the fire department squirting water on the Meyers' barn."

"Scoop's all right," I waggled.

That afternoon the thermometer went up to something like one hundred degrees in the shade, only we didn't know much about what it was like in the shade for the junk that we were working on was piled in the middle of the yard where there were no trees. We lugged castings and steel bars and other stuff around until it seemed to me as though the muscles of my arms would crack and curl up. I never was so dog-gone tired in all my life. But we made progress. The pile of stuff in the middle of the yard began to look more orderly. We put the cast iron in one pile and the steel pieces in another pile. The brass stuff went into a box. Mr. Solbeam explained to us that the brass was worth more than the iron and steel, and at his orders we dragged the box to a

shed, the door of which was fitted with a padlock.

The shed, we found, was cluttered with all kinds of odd and interesting things that the junk man had bought, in the probable thought that he would be able to resell the stuff and make a profit.

"What the dickens? . . ." yipped Scoop. "Here's some pieces of a merry-go-round. Look at the wooden horses! Some with three legs and some with two legs and some with only one leg. Here's one without a head."

"And here's the merry-go-round organ," yipped Red, from his side of the shed.

"Wind it up," I laughed, "and see if it'll play a tune."

Scoop came on the run.

"Hot dog!" he cried, sort of draping himself over the dusty organ. "It's just what we need for our show."

Mr. Solbeam was out in front talking loudly to a deaf old man who had just brought a load of rags into the yard.

"I'm going to tackle him," cried Scoop, "and see what he wants for the organ."

Excited over our find, Red and I quite forgot about our tired arms and legs. We dragged the organ clear of the stuff that had been piled on top of it and dusted it off. It sure was a hard-

looker. As the saying is, it had seen better days. But we didn't care how rickety it was if it would make music. There was a little image on top that was supposed to beat a metal jigger. But it didn't work. When Red turned the crank the image just jiggled its arm, as though it had a bad case of frazzled nerves.

"Lookit!" I cried, pointing to the organ's name. "O-r-c-h-e-s-t-r-e-l-l-e," I spelt.

"I thought it was a hand organ," Red said, disappointed.

"It is a hand organ," I grinned. "A plain old hand organ with a fancy name. But that's all the better," I waggled. "For we can print the name in our advertising. It'll sound big. Turn the crank some more," I instructed. "Let's see if it's got any tunes hid away in its ribs."

The organ, under Red's spirited winding, let out some awful groans and squeaks. It wheezed and puffed, acting for all the world as though it was gagging on a fish bone or had a hot potato in its musical mouth.

"It needs oiling," panted Red, straightening and rubbing his back.

Here Scoop came on the run.

"It took two dollars to buy it," he told us, "but it's worth it. He asked twenty dollars at the

start. But I talked him down. He probably was glad to get the two cart wheels. For he wouldn't have many chances to sell a thing like this."

"We may be throwing our money away," I said. "For Red has been twisting its tail for five minutes, trying to tame it, and it hasn't done anything except stutter."

"Oh," cried Scoop, pleased with his purchase, "we can make it play. I'm not worried about that."

It was our plan to haul the heavy engine to the scow the following morning in Scoop's delivery wagon. But in our eagerness to explore the inside of our organ, we took it away with us at the close of our day's work, carting it down the street on one of Mr. Solbeam's wabbly wheelbarrows.

It was agreed among us that we were to meet at Red's house, directly after supper, to find out what was inside of the hand organ and sort of get on the good side of it. Not knowing how many tunes it had, or what they were like, filled us with excitement.

At Red's suggestion we went up the alley as we approached his house. This was to avoid attention. Putting the organ in the barn, we separated.

CHAPTER V

TAMING THE HAND ORGAN

I HAD a cold supper. For Mother was away from home.

"It must be the regular afternoon meeting of the Stitch and Chatter Club," joked Dad, grinning at me across the table.

Having dirtied only a few dishes, we put these in a pan in the kitchen sink; then I hurried over to Red's barn with a screw driver and a handful of wrenches.

Scoop didn't show up for ten or fifteen minutes, having been to the dock where Peg was still on guard.

"Too bad," I said to Scoop, "that Peg can't be here."

"I don't think it's worrying him," the leader grinned. "For I found him with his nose in your 'Waltzing Hen' book when I took his supper over to him. He seemed to be perfectly contented."

"He's had the soft part of it to-day," spoke up Red, thinking of our hard work in the junk yard.

"Did I tell you," Scoop inquired of the freckled one, "that he's going to take your place to-night?"

"What's the idea?"

"He thinks he can solve the mystery of the whispering ghost."

Red shivered.

"I'll think twice before *I* ever put in a night on that spooky old boat."

We pulled the hand organ into the middle of the barn floor and removed its wooden top.

Red squinted inside.

"Phew!" he sniffed. "It smells like an old mouse trap."

There was a burst of laughter from the house and the clatter of dishes.

"What's going on in there?" I inquired of Red.

"Oh, Ma's entertaining the stitchers and chatterers. Hand me the oil can."

There was a lot of wheels and queer-shaped jiggers inside of the organ. We didn't know what they were for. But, as they looked kind of rusty, we cleaned them with an old shirt of Red's and gave them a liberal oiling. There was no squeaking now when we turned the crank. Nor was there, to our disappointment, any music.

Red was in his glory. For he loves to tinker with machinery. About every so often he takes

the family clock to pieces. One time he whittled out a repeating rig-a-jig for his mother's talking machine and ruined ten dollars' worth of choice records.

His freckled nose deep in the organ's chamber, he suddenly let out a yip.

"Here's a clutch, fellows! That's why it wouldn't play. It wasn't in gear. Try it now."

Scoop grabbed the crank and started winding. There was a lot of wheezes and groans inside of the organ. Then it gave a sudden loud blat.

"Turn faster," danced Red, the oil can in one hand and the screw driver in the other. "It's getting ready to play a tune."

Scoop turned for dear life. And after a bad coughing spell, the organ settled down to business.

"What'd I tell you?" cried Red. "It's playing a tune."

"What tune is it?" I grinned.

"Sounds like 'The Old Oaken Bucket.' Maybe, though, it's something else. Anyway, it's a *tune*. So why should we worry what it is?"

"I know what tune it is," I joked. "It's the one the old cat died on."

Scoop continued to twist the organ's tail until

he was blue in the face. Red then took a hand at it. The organ waded through the "bucket" tune, or whatever piece it was, and gurgled out the chorus of "A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight."

"It's getting more up-to-date every minute," laughed Scoop. "Step on it, Red. Atta-boy! Here comes 'After the Ball.' "

Red was out of wind.

"It's your turn," he panted, beckoning to me.

Under my spirited turning, the organ developed a hemorrhage in its left lung. "B-r-r-r-E-r-r-r-B-r-r-r!" it gurgled.

"It's dying," shrieked Red.

As though to prove to us that the freckled one didn't know what he was talking about, the organ took the bit in its teeth, so to speak, and came out strong with "Sweet Rosie O'Grady." Our leader knew the words to the old song. But he had to yell, let me tell you, to make himself heard. For that old organ was bellowing like a mad bull.

Red and I joined in, going "Da-da-da," for we didn't know the words. We kept getting louder and louder, only I couldn't yell as loud as the others. The cranking job took a lot of my wind.

All of a sudden Red's mother bounded into the barn.

"Stop it!" she cried, her fingers in her ears. "Stop it!"

"What's the matter?" grinned Scoop, when the organ had expired. "Don't you like music, Mrs. Meyers?"

"Yes, I like *music*. I thought it was Donald screaming for help." She pressed a hand to her heart and drew a deep breath. "Such a scare as I had." She came closer and gave the organ a puzzled glance. "What in the world is it?—a hand organ?"

"It's an orchestrelle," I grinned, remembering the organ's fancy name.

"It's a part of our show," Red spoke up, glowing with pride. Then he told his mother about the merry-go-round in Mr. Solbeam's shed.

"It's a wonder to me," she said stiffly, "that you didn't lug the whole merry-go-round home, while you were about it."

Mother came into sight in the barn door.

"See what our sons and heirs have dragged home from somebody's ash pile," pointed Mrs. Meyers. "A hand organ," she added, and from the way she said it you could have imagined that our fine organ was a cross-eyed flea on a shunned alley cat.

I didn't blame Red for stiffening.

"How do you get that way?" he cried, scowling. "We paid two dollars for it. It's a good organ, too. I like it better than our old piano."

Some more curious-eyed members of the Stitch and Chatter Club came into sight.

"Was Donald hurt, Mrs. Meyers?"

"Aw! . . ." scowled Red. "We aren't giving a party."

"*I* am," his mother said quickly. "And I want you to stop this horrible racket. We can't hear ourselves think. And people are stopping in the street and staring at the house."

Red angrily jerked Mr. Solbeam's bow-legged wheelbarrow into sight.

"A fellow can't have any fun around here at all. No, he can't. Take hold of it," he growled at Scoop, "and help me put it on the wheelbarrow. We'll take it down to our boat, where we can play it without being jawed at. Huh!"

CHAPTER VI

UNDER POWER

THE next morning I was so stiff that I hated the thought of getting up. But I managed to drag myself out of bed in time to have breakfast with Dad and Mother. They were laughing and talking as I limped down the stairs, rubbing my eyes and carefully stretching. I heard Mother say something about an organ. She quit talking when I came into the room. Dad was grinning. When breakfast was over I rode with him to the brickyard, hurrying to the boat to relieve Scoop and Peg.

"Well," I grinned at the hungry ones, "did you entertain the whispering ghost last night with some choice hand organ selections?"

Peg shook his head.

"Nothing happened all night long," he told me, disappointed.

At eight-thirty Scoop drove to the dock with the engine. We had a time unloading it. And when we finally got it into the boat we despaired

for a time of ever being able to use it. We moved it this way and that way, trying various schemes. But we didn't get anywhere.

The trouble was we had no way of getting our power *into* the water. It was no particular trick to set up the engine—that part of the task gave us no concern; but it *was* a trick, let me tell you, to figure out a practical propeller.

We finally decided that we would have to buy a drive shaft from Mr. Solbeam. This cost us another fifty cents. Our thirty dollars, I told Scoop, was going fast. We had spent five dollars and fifty cents.

"That's all right," he said easily. "We should expect to pay out our working capital. That's what it's for."

"I'll be glad," I said, "when the money starts coming in."

"The engine scheme," he said, "is going to put us back a day or two. But it's better, *I* think, to be a day or so behind, and do the thing right, than to start up in a hurry and make a halfway job of it."

After a lot of puzzling work we finally got our engine bolted in position on the rear deck, to one side of the big rudder. Of course, it would have been better if we could have positioned the engine

in the center of the deck where the rudder was. But that was out of the question.

We let our freckled chum do the most of the planning. For he seemed to have better ideas than any of the rest of us. He was already calling himself the "engineer."

We made a two-blade propeller out of wood, clamping it on the lower end of the drive shaft, which had been given a braced bearing just above the water.

It took us a full half hour to get the engine started. I cranked and Scoop cranked and Peg cranked. When it did start it smoked worse than old Paddy Gorbett's kitchen chimney. But Red said that was a good thing—it proved that the engine was getting plenty of oil.

"I can hear a knock," Scoop said, listening.

"What do you expect for three dollars?" grunted Red, sticking up for his pet. "That knock won't hurt anything. Forget it."

We loosened the *Sally Ann* and the engineer shoved the gear-box lever into "low," thus putting the propeller shaft into slow motion.

"Hurray!" yipped Scoop, throwing his cap into the air. "We're moving!"

Red slipped the propeller into high gear.

"She's working as slick as a button," he shrieked above the engine's roar.

"Some class to us," yipped Peg, cocking his cap on one ear and posing, skipper-like, against the tiller.

"Watch your job," I laughed, giving the tiller a jerk. "You almost ran us into the bank."

"Let's try backing up," suggested Scoop.

Red pushed the lever into "reverse." Slowly the *Sally Ann* came to a stop, then began to back up.

"Shove her into 'forward,'" Scoop directed, "and we'll take a trip down the canal."

We went about a mile. Several times the engine stuttered and gagged, but that was nothing to worry about, Red said. Coming home we had to back up, for there wasn't enough room in the canal for us to turn around. But to us the backing up was just as much fun as going ahead. We told ourselves that we were pretty smart. Not many boys our age could have done a job like this. And what did we care if it took us an hour to go a couple of miles? The *Sally Ann* was moving under her own power, and that was the main thing. We would have no trouble getting over to Ashton and back. The county seat was sep-

arated from Tutter by only a few miles. We could make an all-day trip of it, if necessary. A thing we weren't short of was time.

To save ourselves the tiresome work of cranking the hand organ, we made a wooden pulley, to take the place of the crank, and ran a belt from the pulley to the engine. By speeding the engine we could make "The Old Oaken Bucket" sound like a jazzy fox trot.

It was now well along toward suppertime. So Scoop remained at the boat while the rest of us went home to eat. That night Peg and I stood guard, sleeping turn about. But there was no disturbance throughout the night. We saw nothing of either the whispering ghost or the tricky Stricker gang.

Scoop relieved us at six o'clock. And after breakfast the leader and I went to the *Daily Globe* office to order our tickets.

These would be ready for us at noon, we were told, and would cost us a dollar.

"Maybe," Scoop said to the editor, giving me a nudge, "you'd like to have some more news about our show."

The man laughed and brought out his pencil.

"We're going to open up to-night."

"Fine!"

"Our show is going to be a humdinger. Music and everything."

"Music? Some one going to play a mouth organ?"

"No. We've bought an orchestrelle."

"A which?"

"An orchestrelle," Scoop repeated, grinning.

"How do you spell it?"

"Evidently," Scoop joked, "you aren't very well posted on the better class of musical instruments."

"That," sighed Mr. Stair, in pretended depression, "is one of the tragedies of my life. I'm on speaking terms with a jew's-harp; but that's the extent of my musical education, so to speak. Does this rig-a-ma-jig of yours start with an 'a' or an 'o'?"

"O-r-c-h-e-s-t-r-e-l-l-e," spelt Scoop. It surprised me that he didn't get some of the letters twisted around. For he's the poorest speller in our class. I'm one of the best.

"Who plays it?" the editor wanted to know.

"It plays itself—it's automatic."

Mr. Stair laughed when we told him about our engine.

"We wouldn't have thought of it," admitted

Scoop, "if you hadn't mentioned it in your newspaper."

"Are you going to go over to Ashton with your show?"

"Maybe."

An inquiry was then made of the editor regarding the cost of advertising in his newspaper.

"Our regular rate," he informed, "is twenty cents a column inch. For two dollars, which will give you five inches, double column, you can make quite a showing. Is your copy ready?"

"It will be," Scoop grinned, "in ten jerks of a lamb's tail."

Here is the advertisement that he wrote, after considerable changing and erasing:

WORLD'S GREATEST BLACK ART SHOW OPENS TO-NIGHT

To-night we will give our first show on our magnificent floating theater, the *Sally Ann,* which will leave the central bridge dock, for a moonlight trip down the canal, at 8:30.

We've got the best show of its kind on earth, and you don't want to miss it.

Something doing every minute.

Kermann, the master magician of the age, will make his first appearance in Tutter.

He makes tables disappear right before your very eyes.

See the amazing "Living Head."

A show for big people as well as kids.

Enjoy this moonlight excursion on our beautiful canal; hear the orchestrelle, the only musical instrument of its kind in town.

Admission, 15c. Children, 10c.

THE "SALLY ANN" SHOW COMPANY

Pretty soon we were in the street, headed for the show boat.

"This afternoon," Scoop planned, "we'll have a rehearsal; then we'll start the engine and run the *Sally Ann* to the central bridge dock. If we play the organ we'll attract a lot of attention. People will come running to find out what's going on. Then they'll see our ad in to-night's paper. That'll bring them out."

CHAPTER VII

OUR FIRST SHOW

In line with our leader's plans, we had a rehearsal that afternoon, running the show boat a short distance out of town, so that we could do our rehearsing undisturbed.

Of course, we couldn't put on the regular show, as it had to be dark to do that. But Scoop dressed in his magician's suit of white cloth and Peg and I, who worked on the stage as unseen assistants, put on our black suits.

The reason why we were invisible to the audience was because everything back of us on the stage was black. Scoop could be seen because he was dressed in white, with his face and hair powdered white. Lights arranged up and down the sides of the stage, reflected into the audience, dazzled the spectators. Looking into these lights, they could see nothing on the stage that wasn't white. Dressed in black, a black veil over our faces, Peg and I could move here and there without detection.

The trick consisted of making tables, pitchers, cups and white things like that appear and disappear in a most surprising way. It was an easy trick to perform when one had the necessary stuff. We would have a white table behind a black screen and when we wanted the table to "appear," Scoop, as the magician, would wave his wand and Peg or I, whoever had hold of the screen, would jerk it away, thus bringing the table, in a flash, into sight of the audience.

Scoop would make pitchers and cups appear and disappear on the white table. To do this, Peg or I would bring the necessary pitcher on the stage, keeping the white article out of sight behind a small black screen. Then we would rest the screen on the table top, with the white pitcher behind it, jerking the screen away at Scoop's signal, thus making the pitcher "appear." In the same way we could make cups and saucers appear and disappear—any number of times. We could make white flowers grow out of white flower pots; produce white rabbits from small white cups. By dangling a white ball on the end of a black string, we could make it do many surprising things.

Probably the best trick of all was what we called the "Living Head." We had a wooden

platter, painted white, made so that I could slide my chin over the back edge. To the audience it appeared that my head was resting on the platter. Scoop would carry the platter across the stage, and, of course, I would walk under the platter, for I had to go wherever my head went. To do this trick I had to powder my face white, like Scoop's, and in the trick, to get a laugh, I was supposed to wink and yawn, sort of droll-like. By keeping my black suit on from my neck down, the audience couldn't see anything of me except my white head.

Following our rehearsal we ran the *Sally Ann* to the dock at the central bridge. A lot of kids gathered on the bridge, among them the Stricker gang. When we started our hand organ, practically all of Main Street came running to see what was going on.

Red's big sister came along with some stylish girl friends. But she didn't stay very long. I guess the sight of Red hurt her pride. Seated on the edge of the ticket stand, megaphone in hand, he was having the time of his life.

"La-adies and gents," he yipped, "don't forget the bi-ig show to-night. See Kermann, the great hoodoo magician, who has appeared before all of the crowned heads of Europe. Remember the

bi-ig show to-night at eight-thirty. O-only fifteen cents admission. Ten cents for kids."

"That's the kind of stuff to hand them," grinned Scoop, "only don't call me a 'hoodoo' magician. It's 'Hindu' and not 'hoodoo.' "

We could see that the Strickers were jealous of us. They had their heads together, whispering and pointing. I could imagine how cheap they felt. They had tried to bust up our show, but we had been too smart for them.

That evening at the supper table I inquired of Dad if he and Mother were planning to attend our show.

"I should snicker," he winked. "We wouldn't miss it for a panful of pickled pretzels."

"Thirty cents," I checked off in my mind. A hundred families at thirty cents apiece would be thirty dollars. Hot dog! I could see where we were going to make a barrel of money, all right.

Hurrying back to the boat, where Peg was on guard, I met Scoop, whose arms were full of packages and paper bags.

"Stuff to eat," he told me.

"Are you going to serve refreshments during the show?" I grinned.

"Hardly. But if we expect to go to Ashton with our show, we might as well start living on

the boat first as last. It'll be fun. To-morrow Pa is going to send down a boiled ham and a bag of potatoes. This is stuff I got at the store for breakfast."

It began to get dark shortly after eight o'clock, so we lit the big lamp near the ticket stand and the dazzle lamps on the sides of the stage. Red had five dollars' worth of change handy. He was impatient to begin selling tickets. We were impatient to have him begin—we wanted to see the money pile up in the change box. But, of course, we had to wait with our ticket selling until it was dark enough to go ahead with our show.

People began to gather on the dock, talking and laughing. Scoop's father and mother were there and so was Peg's folks. I could see a number of our neighbors in Dad's party. There was a lot of jolly talk. Dad was cutting up. He was a whole show in himself. Golly Ned! The older I grow the bigger my love gets for my swell dad.

Well, about eight-fifteen Red opened the gate and the waiting kids and the grown people filed past the ticket stand, handing the ticket seller their money. In no time at all the seats were all filled. Dad and Mother were up in front with Red's mother. Mr. Meyers couldn't come, be-

cause, as owner of the Lyric theater, he had to work.

Selling his last ticket, Red shut the gate, setting the boat free of its tie ropes. Pretty soon the scow was moving slowly down the canal.

Scoop was behind the big black screen, and at his signal we jerked the screen away, making him "appear." He bowed and everybody clapped their hands.

Having carefully rehearsed our parts we knew just what to do and when to do it. Everything went off fine. We made two tables appear, one on each side of the stage. Then we made a pitcher appear on one table and a flower pot on the other. In the course of the performance I went back of the curtain to prepare myself for the "Living Head" trick.

Scoop told the audience that he would now perform his greatest feat. That was my cue. Putting a black screen in front of my powdered head, so that I wouldn't be seen, I slipped my chin over the edge of the white wooden platter. Scoop waved his wand and Peg jerked away the screen.

There was a ripple of laughter.

"Hi, Jerry!" some kid in the audience called out.

"Who cut your head off, Jerry?" another yelled.

"It can't be Jerry," I heard Dad say, "because it looks too clean."

I grinned.

"Cut it out," Scoop hissed. "You aren't supposed to be alive yet."

So I shut my eyes and drew down my face, sober-like, which set everybody to laughing again. You can see I was good.

Scoop went on with his performance. And at the proper time, at his command, I slowly opened my eyes. As I did so I felt something touring around on the back of my neck. I hadn't any doubt what it was, for the air was full of pinch bugs. Not small ones, but the big kind, that sort of swoop down on a fellow and grab a hunk of skin and start gnawing. I tried to wriggle my neck, to make the bug fly away. But it hung on like a plaster.

"Ouch!" I screeched, when the hungry skin eater had started in on his supper.

The audience roared. It probably did look funny to them; but, let me tell you, it wasn't funny to me.

Scoop stepped to the front of the stage.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he grinned, "our 'Liv-

ing Head' has been punctured by a pinch bug, so we will have to end the show and send for a plumber."

We had carefully instructed Red that he was to reverse the propeller at a certain point in the show, timing our excursion so that we would get back to the dock at nine o'clock, a few minutes after the show came to an end.

So, as I left the stage, rubbing the back of my neck, I had no other thought than that we were within sight of the dock. Consider my surprise, therefore, to learn that we were still a half mile in the country.

Getting out of my suit I hurried to the rear deck to see if Red needed help.

"Something's wrong," he told me, turning a pair of anxious eyes on me.

"What do you mean?"

"We don't move. See?" and he pointed to the trees that grew along the canal bank.

He was right. The engine was working; the propeller was churning; but the boat wasn't moving a hair.

"Everything was working slick," he said. "Then, all of a sudden, the boat stopped dead still. That was five—ten minutes ago. Since then we haven't moved an inch."

"Maybe we're on a sand bar."

"It acts to me as though the blamed boat is bewitched."

He was thinking of the whispering ghost.

"When do we go home?" a voice in the audience called out good-naturedly.

"Pretty quick," I called back.

"What's the matter?" Scoop inquired, appearing at my elbow.

I told him that we weren't moving.

"The propeller's turning," he said, looking into the water.

"Sure thing. But the boat is standing still."

"Something's got hold of it," spoke up Red.

"What do you mean?" Scoop inquired sharply.

"He thinks it's the ghost," I put in.

"Bunk! I'd sooner think it's a trick of the Strickers."

"But how——" I began.

My words broke off sharply as something struck me on the leg and rattled to the deck. Stooping, I picked up a small metal washer. There was a rolled-up note in the disc's bore.

Here is what I read:

There is a rope stretched across the canal.

THE FRIENDLY GHOST.

Well, when we got back to town, after having cut the Strickers' rope, we tried to figure out among ourselves who the friendly ghost was. That it was a man, we could not doubt. The note had been tossed to us out of the darkness. Obviously the "ghost" had been close to our boat, probably in a boat of his own. Yet we had seen no small boat in the canal.

Who was he? Why was he taking sides with us against the Strickers? Was he constantly keeping near us? It would seem so. Even as we discussed the mystery, he probably was within hearing of our voices.

But why had he, a man, signed himself "The Friendly Ghost"? Did he intend that we should believe that he *was* a ghost?

In a vague way we had the feeling that there was a hidden connection between our show and the unknown man's visit to the boat the night the Strickers had sought to destroy our stuff. It was because of our show that he was keeping near us . . . watching us.

What we didn't suspect was the startling adventure that lay ahead of us as showmen. We realized that we were involved in a mystery; but, for the most part, it seemed to be a rather commonplace affair. It puzzled us but didn't excite

us. We little dreamed, as I say, of what was coming.

After a while we gave our attention to other things of importance to us, for we seemed to make no progress in our discussion of the "ghost."

Red had sold thirty fifteen-cent tickets and twenty-five ten-cent tickets. As a result, we were richer by seven dollars. I had expected to make more. But I wasn't dissatisfied. For I realized now that I had been too enthusiastic. As a matter of fact, seven dollars was good pay for our work.

"If we can do this well all through vacation," Red said, looking ahead, "we'll take in four or five hundred dollars. Whoopee!"

"Let's send up town and get some ice cream and celebrate," suggested Peg.

"I second the motion," laughed Scoop. "Hey, Jerry, oi' money bag, separate yourself from fifty cents. We're going to have a party."

The ice cream put away inside of our stomachs, we went to bed, between ten and eleven o'clock, three of us sleeping and the fourth standing guard. I was a long time getting to sleep. I kept thinking of the money that we were going to earn and the good time that we were going to have. When I finally got to sleep I dreamt that

I was sitting on an ice cream cone a mile high. Five-dollar bills were flying around my head like birds.

"Cut it out!" Scoop growled, giving me a dig in the ribs.

In grabbing at the flying greenbacks, I had pinched his nose!

CHAPTER VIII

THE GIRL IN THE BLUE TAM

THE next morning when we were eating breakfast, after an uneventful night, Dad came whistling to the brickyard dock to learn how we were getting along.

This was a good time, I thought, to sort of feel him out on our proposed Ashton trip.

"We'll soon be going camping," I told him, getting at my subject in a roundabout way.

"I wish I could go with you," he grinned, helping himself to one of our doughnuts.

"We'll let you," Scoop put in quickly.

"No chance," Dad sighed. "I've got to keep my nose to the grindstone."

"We won't have to bother you this year," I went on, "to haul our truck up the canal in the car. For we're going to use our boat."

"*This* boat?"

"Sure thing. We probably can earn some money, too."

"Taking passengers?"

"If we camp on Oak Island," I said, "we can stop at Ashton on the way to the wide waters and give our show. And once we get to the island, it isn't so very far to Steam Corners."

"You better hire a mule," Dad laughed.

"What for?"

"This engine of yours will never carry you that far."

"Hey!" yipped Red, grinning. "Don't you run down our swell engine."

"It's an old engine and liable to go blooey at any minute. I wouldn't trust it two miles, myself."

"If it breaks down," boasted Red, "I can fix it."

In our further talk, Dad made it plain to us that he wasn't keen about letting us start out in the scow. He couldn't bring himself to believe, he said, serious, that we would be able to go very many miles without a serious breakdown.

But he had promised to let me go camping when the other fellows went. And, as they had gained their parents' consent to the trip, he couldn't very well say "no" to me without backing down on his word.

So I finally got his reluctant consent.

That day we put a bigger advertisement in the

Daily Globe, for the coming show was to be our last one in Tutter until we had returned from our out-of-town trip. When the advertising bill had been paid, I sort of balanced my accounts, if that is the way to express it. Here is the way my figures looked on paper:

Scoop	$7.00	Engine	$3.00
Red	10.00	Organ	2.00
Peg	3.00	Shaft	.50
Jerry	10.00	Tickets	1.00
		Advertising	2.00
Working capital	$30.00	Ice Cream	.50
Ticket sales	7.00	Advertising	3.00
Total	$37.00	Total expenses	$12.00
(Sub.) Expenses	12.00		
Cash on hand	$25.00		

That afternoon we started the engine and turned on the organ to let the townsfolk know that we were still on the job. Red told us that the engine was burning a lot of gasoline. We didn't let that worry us, for Scoop was getting the gasoline for nothing at his father's store. In preparing for our trip, the leader filled three five-gallon cans. There was another fifteen gallons

in the engine tank, so we figured that we wouldn't have to spend any of our working capital for gasoline for several days. By that time we probably would be rolling in money.

There wasn't such a big crowd at our show that night. The older people, for the most part, didn't seem to be greatly interested in our performance. But we took in four dollars, the most of it in ten-cent admissions. Mother and Dad were there. I talked with them just before the show started.

"Have a good time," Mother told me, referring to our camping trip, "but be careful and don't run any foolish risks."

I promised.

"I hope you haven't any guns on board."

"None that I know of."

"I'm afraid of guns." She slipped something into my hand. "It's a ten-dollar bill, Jerry. Keep it for an emergency."

"There aren't going to be any emergencies," I boasted.

"I hope not. But it has been my experience that not infrequently the unexpected happens. Drop me a card when you get to Ashton. And be sure and brush your teeth and don't go dirty."

It was our intention to start on our trip as soon

as the show was over. So our folks, having been advised of our plan, were there to say good-by to us. There was a lot of waving back and forth as the *Sally Ann* got under way. Then we passed under the bridge and the others were lost to our sight.

"Well," said Scoop, dropping into a seat on a box, "we're off."

"The only thing I regret," grunted Peg, "is that we didn't even scores with the Strickers before leaving town. For we owe them something for that rope trick."

"Let's send the 'friendly ghost' back to clean up on 'em," grinned Scoop.

"We're fast leaving the ghost behind us," I laughed.

"I hope so," Red spoke up quickly, squinting uneasily down the canal.

Grinning, Scoop got to his feet and cupped his hands to his mouth.

"Hey, mister friendly ghost," he called, "give Bid Stricker a black eye for me." He sat down, still grinning. "It's all right now," he waggled. "We're revenged."

In a short time we had left Tutter behind us. The moon was shining, making it easy for us to keep the *Sally Ann* in the middle of the canal.

Peg was handling the tiller. Red had the engine in charge. Scoop and I had nothing to do except to enjoy the ride and thrill in the thought of the probable adventures that lay ahead of us.

"Let's have some refreshments," Peg sang out.

Feeling around under the deck, where our provisions were stored, Scoop brought out a loaf of bread and the boiled ham that his father had generously donated. He made two sandwiches apiece.

Coming to the small wide waters, halfway between Tutter and Ashton, we anchored the scow close to the right-hand wooded shore, putting out the required lights. Then we turned in.

Just before I dozed off I heard a fish flop close to the boat. It must have been a big carp. Then a screech owl settled on a limb directly over the boat and told us, in mournful, plaintive hoots, what it thought of us. There were thousands of fireflies in the air. The night was wonderfully still. I filled my lungs with the cool air. Wouldn't it be fine, I thought, if I could always live like this, and never again had to sleep in a bed in a stuffy bedroom?

Peg was the first one up the following morning. We heard him give a yell, which was followed by a loud splash.

"Come on in, you sleepy-eyed bums," he shrieked, splashing around in the water.

"Next!" I shouted, skinning out of my underwear. Losing my balance, I bumped against Red. We both went rolling.

"Let's get Scoop," he whispered. So, in this scheme, we kept rolling until we bumped against the leader. Jumping up, we threw a blanket over the tricked one's head. While he was fighting the blanket, to free himself, we ran and jumped into the canal, giving him the horselaugh.

"I'll get even with you fellows to-morrow morning," he told us from the deck.

"Jump in," we cried. "If you don't, we'll come there and throw you in."

"I'm after the red-headed engineer," the leader cried, and leaping, he struck the water a few feet from where the chased one was frantically scrambling up the bank. Red managed to get out of the canal before his pursuer could touch him, and racing along the tow path he made a flying dive. Scoop was close behind him. Pretty soon the two of them came to the surface, sputtering and splashing.

"Here he is, fellows," Scoop panted, hanging to the prisoner by the hair. "I've captured the engineer."

"Make him dress and cook breakfast," laughed Peg.

It was a dandy warm summer's morning. We had slept later than we had intended. But we figured that there was still plenty of time for us to get to Ashton before noon.

"We probably won't be able to get an ad in to-night's paper," said Scoop. "But we can have some handbills printed, telling about the show. Three-four hundred won't cost much. We can distribute them this afternoon, a light job. For Ashton's a small town."

Breakfast over, Scoop and I and Peg gave the dishes a hurried bath in the canal while Red greased the engine, getting it ready for the day's pull.

But when we came to crank the engine it wouldn't respond. Ready to give up, after twenty minutes of steady winding, we finally got a faint explosion, then another and another. Once in motion the motor quickly gained speed. But, oh, boy, how it smoked!

Just before we came within sight of Ashton, two men appeared in the tow path, at a lonely spot in the canal, signaling to us to stop and put them on the opposite shore.

Red promptly stopped the propeller. As soon

as the scow brushed the bank the men jumped aboard. The leader was white-haired, a man of probably sixty years of age, with a thin hard face and peculiar beady black eyes. As I looked at him I was instinctively turned against him. He was the direct opposite to the kind of a man that I liked. His face held hidden stories; even his guarded movements suggested hidden unworthy things.

The most noticeable thing about the other man, outside of his thin tallness and his preacher-like coat, which came to his knees, was his nose. It was a big nose. And what tended to make it seem still bigger was a wart on the end of it. I had to smile as I looked at him. He made me think of pictures I had seen of the schoolmaster in the Sleepy Hollow story.

"Well, well," he said, stepping around sort of jaunty-like and taking in everything with a lit-up face. "What have we here? A stage! Upon my word, a genuine stage. And seats! Ah-ha! I have, I believe, penetrated the secret. I am aboard a theatrical craft. A theatrical craft, I should add, in charge of four young showmen. A juvenile venture into the realms of the dramatic art. How interesting. How very, very interesting. In this familiar atmosphere of the—aw—

spoken play, I am stirred to memories of past golden days." He got on the stage and sort of posed like an actor. I guess he would have given us an exhibition of his acting if his blazing-eyed companion hadn't turned on him in a sudden fury.

"You fool!" the beady-eyed one cried. And at the cutting words, which were a sort of indirect command, the actor stopped stone-like, a look of fear rushing into his face.

They were a peculiar pair. And when they left the boat I followed them with curious eyes. There was a small dock here, to which two green rowboats were tied. Back from the canal was a big house, built after the plan of an old-time log cabin, with a wide summer porch in front and big fireplace chimneys.

"Huh!" grunted Scoop, as the two queer men disappeared up the path that led to the house. "They might at least have thanked us."

Red was excited.

"Did you notice what the gabby one had in his coat pockets?"

"What?"

"Tools. Screw drivers and wrenches. I noticed that the pockets bulged. And when the man came near me I took a good squint. . . . What

do you bet," freckles made the guess, "that he isn't a safe breaker?"

"The one with the beady eyes," Peg spoke up, "looked to me like the type of fellow who would knife his best friend in the back for a bottle of horse-raddish."

"He's got the other one scared of him," I put in.

Scoop was studying the lonely surroundings.

"Do you suppose," he inquired of us, in a sort of reflective way, "that the log house is a counterfeiters' den? That would explain the tools in the man's pockets. And this is the kind of a secluded place that counterfeiters would like."

"Lookit!" I pointed. "Here comes a girl around the corner of the house. She's heading this way. Let's pump her."

Scoop saw a chance to have some fun.

"We'll let Red talk to her. For he's the best lady-killer in the gang."

His engine having stopped for some reason or other, the engineer had gone to work on it.

"What's that?" he inquired, lifting a greasy face.

"Wipe off your chin and pull down your vest," grinned Scoop. "For we're going to have company."

Red let out his neck at the approaching girl.

"Aw! . . . You think you're smart," he scowled.

The girl came to the dock and regarded us with amused eyes. She wasn't quite as old as we were, probably not more than twelve. She wore a blue tam, which, as you may know, is a sort of cloth hat with a tassel on top. Her dress was blue, too, the color of her eyes.

In his interest in the engine, Red had forgotten all about the approaching girl.

"Blame it!" he cried, straightening and giving the balky engine a kick. "I can't get it started, fellows." When he saw who was watching him from the dock, only a few feet away, his face got two shades redder than his hair.

"Maybe you're giving it too much gas," the girl spoke up. "We have an engine like that in my grandfather's automobile; and we're always having trouble with it. Let me show you what to do."

She jumped aboard and joined the worker. This tickled Scoop. And he got behind the flushed engineer, nudging the latter in the ribs.

"Huh!" Red grunted, scowling at the newcomer. "What do *you* know about machinery?"

The girl looked at him and laughed.

"What will you give me," she asked, "if I start your engine for you?"

"Huh!" Red grunted again, giving her a sort of contemptuous up-and-down look. This thing of a small girl telling him how to run his own engine was more than he could stand.

The newcomer turned to Scoop.

"Is 'Huh!' the only English word he knows?" she smiled.

"At mealtime," the leader laughed, "he can say 'pie' and 'cake.' And he can say 'Pretty Polly' when he wants a cracker."

"Shut up!" scowled Red.

Here the girl forgot about the engine in a sudden interest in our show stuff.

"You have a regular theater, haven't you? What kind of a show is it?"

"Magic."

"Who is the magician?"

"Me. This fellow," the boaster further informed, pulling me forward, "is the 'Living Head.' Ham-and-gravy over there," he added, pointing to Peg, "is my chief stage assistant. Little fuss-budget here sells tickets and takes in the mon."

"I'll 'fuss-budget' you with a monkey wrench," screamed Red, "if you don't dry up."

The girl pretended fright.

"Does he eat people alive?" she inquired of Scoop.

"Not as a general rule," the leader returned seriously. "As a matter of fact, after you once get acquainted with him, if you can stand his freckles and red hair, he's a pretty likeable sort of a kid. . . . Do you live here?"

The girl nodded, with a quick glance toward the house.

"It is my grandfather's home," she informed.

"Does your father live here, too?"

"No. My parents are both dead."

"Maybe," said Scoop, "it was your white-haired grandfather that we just helped across the canal."

"It couldn't have been him. For he has been working in his flower garden all morning. I just left him there."

"We put two men across the canal," Scoop informed, "and they went into your house."

The girl looked at him, puzzled.

"Two men?" she repeated.

"Yes," Red spoke up, giving the girl a spiteful look, "and they were a couple of bums."

The granddaughter's eyes flashed angrily.

"My grandfather doesn't associate with bums."

Red gave a tantalizing laugh, glad of the chance to anger the other.

"*You* look like a bum yourself," the girl cried, in a burst of passion. "And so do *you* and *you* and *you*," she jabbed with her finger. "I hope you never get your old engine started. *There!*" and stomping her foot she turned and ran up the path to the house.

CHAPTER IX

UNDER ARREST

It was a few minutes short of twelve o'clock when we drew up at the Ashton dock. Red wanted to turn the organ on immediately, to sort of hilariously announce our arrival in town. But Scoop shook his head on the freckled one's suggestion. The better plan, the leader said, would be to call on the mayor, first of all, and learn what the town's attitude was toward traveling shows.

Several kids came running in the time that we were securing the *Sally Ann* to the dock.

"Look at the funny boat!" one of the newcomers yipped.

"It's a show boat," another cried, taking in our stage and seats with a pair of busy eyes.

"The greatest show of its kind on earth," Scoop told the curious ones. "Kermann, the master magician of the age. Makes tables appear and disappear right before your very eyes. Carries a human head on a platter. Don't miss it,

fellows. It's a humdinger of a show. Cheap, too: only ten cents for kids."

It was good business for us, the leader said, to treat the kids right and answer their questions about the show.

"For they'll go home," he explained, "and tell their folks everything we've said. Then, of course, the whole family will want to see what the show's like."

When the *Sally Ann* was securely tied to the dock, Scoop and I started down the main street in search of the mayor. His office, we were told upon inquiry, was in the town hall.

A short, fat man with a friendly face, we took a liking to the executive as soon as we set eyes on him. There was something about him that gave us confidence in him.

"Well, boys," he smiled, "what can I do for you this morning?"

Scoop, as spokesman, explained about our show.

"Um. . . . You say it's a boys' show?"

"There's four of us in it."

"Four boys?"

"Yes, sir."

"There aren't any grown people back of the proposition, or in any way connected with it?"

"No, sir."

The mayor laughed in a sudden thought.

"You must be the 'enterprising young showmen' that I read about in the Tutter newspaper."

"That's us," grinned Scoop.

"Did Stair send you over here to 'toot your show horn at our canal door,' as he put it in his newspaper article?"

"Mr. Stair has nothing to do with our show," Scoop assured quickly.

There was a moment's silence.

"Well, we usually charge a license fee for traveling shows, but I guess we'll forget about the fee in this case. Yes, boys, you have my permission to go ahead with your show. Only don't try any skin-game. If you do, you'll get into trouble."

We thanked him warmly, assuring him that our show was clean, and no skin-game, as he called it.

"Let me give you some free tickets," Scoop offered.

But the executive firmly brushed the tickets aside.

"No, boys. I don't accept presents for granting favors. To not do that is one of the rules of my office. I thank you, though. And it isn't

improbable that I will be around this evening to see what kind of magicians you are."

When we were almost to the door, Scoop turned back.

"I wonder," he said, "if you can tell us the name of the people who live in the log house on the canal bank coming into town."

"You must mean the Garber place."

"There's a girl about my size in the family."

"Yes; that is old Mr. Garber's granddaughter. What about it?"

"We saw a pair of suspicious-acting strangers hanging around there."

"Well?"

"Maybe the place is a counterfeiters' den."

The mayor gave a hearty laugh.

"I don't know who your 'suspicious-acting strangers' were; but I can assure you that Mr. Garber himself is a most trustworthy citizen."

"The men went into the house," Scoop hung on.

"They may have been tramps begging a meal."

"Tramps," was the quick reply, "don't go to people's front doors."

I could see from the mayor's actions that he was impatient to get rid of us.

"I hope," he laughed, taking up a legal-look-

ing paper and giving it his attention, "that you boys prove to be better showmen than you have detectives. Good day."

We quickly located the newspaper office. Entering the building, we found an elderly man back of the counter writing in a big book. We tried to get his attention, but he was too busy to notice us. Scoop got huffy.

"Is this a printing plant?" he inquired in a sharp voice.

The bookkeeper lifted his head and scowled at us over his glasses.

"I *thought* it was a printing plant when I first came in," Scoop went on, squinting around curious-like, "but it seems to be a sort of waiting room . . . for customers."

The man's face went red under the thrust.

"What do you want?" he snapped.

"Could you print four hundred handbills in a hurry?"

"That all depends. Who's orderin' 'em?"

"We are."

"And who are 'we'?"

Scoop chestily informed the other that we were in town with our floating theater and proposed to give an evening performance.

"To advertise our show," he went on, "we'll

need some printed handbills—small ones, about four inches by six inches. How soon can you print them?"

"Printin'," the man said pointedly, "costs money."

"How much money?"

"Um. . . . Four hundred four-by-six handbills will cost you three dollars."

At the leader's directions I brought out my roll of greenbacks and peeled off three one-dollar bills.

"Well, well," said the man, sort of thawing out at sight of our wealth.

"If we give you the job," Scoop said, "you've got to promise to have the handbills ready for us by three o'clock. For it'll take us a couple of hours to distribute them, and we'll want to complete the job before supper."

"Got much copy?"

"Not more than a hundred and fifty words."

"That bein' the case, I ought to git the job out by two-thirty easy."

Here is the advertisement that Scoop wrote:

SEE KERMANN, THE MASTER MAGICIAN

The Great Kermann is in town!—the master magician of the age.

See him! See him! See him!

He makes tables disappear right before your very eyes.

The "Living Head," the most baffling trick of modern magic—Kermann does it; actually carries the "Living Head" about the stage on a platter.

You will shiver; you will be mystified; you will laugh at the droll antics of the amazing "Living Head."

A show for old and young.

We will give our first performance in Ashton to-night, on our magnificent floating theater, the *Sally Ann,* which will leave the central dock for a moonlight excursion down the canal at 8:30.

Enjoy the moonlight ride; hear the orchestrelle.

Admission, 15c. Children, 10c.

THE "SALLY ANN" SHOW COMPANY

We stopped at a bakery and bought a pie and two loaves of bread, after which we hurried to

the dock, hoping that dinner would be ready for us when we got there.

Peg came running to meet us.

"Did you see 'em?" he inquired, excited.

"See who?"

"The Strickers."

"What?" cried Scoop, staring.

"They're in town," Peg waggled. "We saw them on the canal bridge about ten minutes ago. Bid and Jimmy and the Watson kid. They were with a strange man."

A cloud came into the leader's face.

"If they try any of their tricks to-night," he waggled, his jaw squared, "something is going to drop."

When dinner was over we put everything in order on the boat, so that there would be no hitch when it came time to give our evening show. Red had oiled the organ that forenoon, so shortly after two o'clock we put the music-maker into snappy operation. This drew the kids.

"I'm putting a line or two in to-night's issue about your show," the newspaper man told us, when we called at his office for our handbills. "I hope you have a good crowd." He listened sharply for a second or two. "Is that your orchestrelle that I hear?"

"Sure thing," grinned Scoop. "Isn't it a darb?"

"Is it playing a tune?"

" 'The Old Oaken Bucket.' "

The man grunted.

"If that's 'The Old Oaken Bucket' I'm 'The Last Rose of Summer.' Well, good luck, boys. And thanks for the three dollars and for coming over and waking us up."

When we were in the street Scoop gave me half of the handbills.

"You take the east side of town," he instructed, "and I'll take the west side. Leave a handbill at each house; and where you see a woman on her porch, or standing in her doorway, take off your cap and be very polite, so that she will have a good opinion of us. If she asks you any questions about our show, give her a nice little spiel."

I had been at work for possibly thirty minutes when suddenly I heard my name called. Turning quickly, and looking into the street, I saw Scoop in the back seat of an automobile. A uniformed policeman was seated beside him. Jimmy Stricker and the Watson kid shared the front seat with the driver. Bid was hanging to the car's side, riding on the running-board.

"You're goin' to catch it!" he yipped at me, screwing up his face in a mean way.

My heart sank. For I realized that my chum was under arrest. And, plainly, it was the policeman's intention to arrest me, too.

For an instant I thought of taking to my heels and running away. But I didn't do that. I had done nothing to justify arrest. So why should I play the coward and run away, to be reminded of it ever afterwards by the hated Strickers? Besides, it wasn't right to desert my chum.

Jumping out of the car, the policeman clapped a heavy hand on my shoulder.

"You're under arrest, young feller," he growled.

CHAPTER X

THE GREASED PIG

I WAS put into the car with Scoop, the policeman taking a seat between us, after which the driver turned the car around and started back down the street.

I was scared. I can't deny it. However undeserving I was of arrest, the fact remained that I had been picked up by the law. And innocent though I was, it might not be easy for me to prove my innocence and thereby gain my freedom.

The automobile stopped in front of the mayor's office and the policeman gruffly ordered us to pile out.

"If you try to run away," he scowled, "I'll catch you an' give you ten years at hard labor."

That, of course, was a bluff, and I knew it. For I was well enough acquainted with the processes of the law to know that it was a policeman's job to capture law breakers and not to sentence them.

Still, I didn't like to have him talk that way. It gave me a sort of trapped, helpless feeling.

We all went into the mayor's office, the policeman and my chum and I in one group and the car's other four occupants in another group.

The Strickers were in their glory. Walking on my heels, sort of, Bid kept saying under his breath: "How do you like it, Jerry? Whose turn is it now? You will scare us with your old ghost trick, hey?"

I didn't say anything back. For what was the use? However, I did a lot of thinking. And, in mentally comparing myself with my tormentor, I told myself that I would rather be a jailbird all the rest of my life than to have his mean disposition. Much as I dislike the Zulutown gang, of which Bid is the leader (and I have good occasion to dislike them, let me tell you), I don't go out of my way to pester them. Nor do any of my chums, for that matter. But when *we* do something that gains for us added fun or special public attention, it seems to gall Bid and his gang to the point where all they care to think about is how they can torment us.

The mayor wasn't behind his desk, so the policeman told the driver, a lanky, hungry-looking fellow, to go out and find him.

"Put your handbills over there," the officer told us, pointing to a table beside the room's big desk. His scowl deepened as we obeyed him. "It's plain," he added, "that you kids don't know much about the ordinances of this here town."

I was less frightened now. For I had come to realize all in an instant how easily I could get in touch with Dad if necessary. He would come in a hurry if I telephoned to him that I was in trouble. And he'd know just what to do to gain my release.

"What's the idea of arresting us?" Scoop spoke up. "We haven't done anything wrong."

"Is that so?" Bid put in, letting out his neck. "My Uncle Ike, I want to tell you, is the town bill poster—"

"Shut up!" thundered the policeman. "I'll do the talkin'."

Scoop and I exchanged glances.

"Is it against the law," my chum inquired, getting a clue to the cause of our arrest from what Bid had blurted out, "to peddle bills in this town?"

"You bet your boots it is," Bid waggled. "For the council gave my Uncle Ike the right——"

"Shut up!" bellowed the policeman a second time. "If I have to tell you ag'in," he threatened,

acting as though he was talking across the continent to some one in New York City, "I'll throw you out." He turned to us. "We don't 'low every Tom, Dick an' Harry to throw bills 'round our town to litter up our streets. Not by a jugful! We've got a town bill poster an' it's his job to 'tend to distributin' handbills an' puttin' up posters. That was him I just sent after the mayor."

Well, it was a relief to us to know that we weren't charged with anything more unlawful than peddling handbills without a permit.

"Gee!" grinned Scoop, shedding his depression. "We thought you had us spotted for a pair of escaped bank robbers."

"Here comes the mayor," the policeman growled. "He'll 'tend to your young hides."

The summoned executive came briskly into the room, followed closely by the hungry-looker.

"What's the trouble, boys?" our friend inquired.

"The trouble is," spoke up the policeman in his long-distance voice, "that they've bin peddlin' bills without a permit. Ike here caught 'em at it an' called on me to make the arrest."

"They hain't got no right to go peddlin' handbills in this here teown," Ike put in, wagging and

working his mouth as though he wanted to spit and didn't have a place. We learned afterwards that he was an uncle of the Strickers'. "The council made me official bill poster," he added, with more wagging, "an' if they's any bills to be put out in this here teown, I'm a-goin' to do it, by heck!"

The mayor gravely inquired if we had been handing out bills. In his admission, Scoop pointed to the handbills on the table. The executive picked up one of the bills and read it.

"I'm sorry, boys, but Ike has a case against you. We have an ordinance that prohibits the distribution of circulars such as this except through our authorized bill poster. I'll have to register a complaint against you for disturbing the peace and fine you. The fine will be one dollar each and costs. I have the right to withdraw the costs, and I'm going to do that."

I had told Scoop about my "emergency" ten-dollar bill. We had laughed about it at the time, saying to each other that we would have no occasion to use it. Now, as I fished the greenback out of my pocket, I gave my companion a sort of sheepish grin.

I was given eight dollars in change.

"Remember," the executive enjoined, holding

my eyes, "you're to do no more bill peddling. If you want the rest of your bills peddled, you'll have to make arrangements with Ike."

The hungry one put out his neck, an eager look in his eyes.

"I'll peddle 'em fur a dollar," he offered, working his mouth.

"No, you won't," Scoop snapped, scowling. "We wouldn't give you a penny if we never had a bill peddled."

"Haw! haw! haw!" hooted Bid Stricker, acting big in his triumph over us. "Listen to him blow."

"You're going to get your pay for this," cried Scoop, shaking his fist at the enemy.

"Tut! tut!" the mayor put in quickly. "I won't allow you boys to quarrel in here."

"Can we go now?" Scoop inquired shortly.

"Certainly."

"Hey!" screeched Ike, as we started for the door. "They're takin' the handbills with 'em."

The mayor gave the screecher a sort of disgusted look.

"Why shouldn't they? The handbills are theirs."

"Yes," whined Ike, more hungry-looking than ever, "an' they'll go peddlin' 'em out on the sly."

The mayor followed us to the door, his hands on our shoulders.

"Forget about it, boys. As I say, I'm sorry that it happened; but, of course, as long as we have this ordinance I must stand by it."

When we came to the dock we had to pick our way through a knot of kids. Red was yelling through the megaphone, telling the curious ones what a wonderful show awaited them. But the spieler quickly put away his megaphone at sight of our angry faces.

"Tee! hee!" he snickered, when he had been told about our arrest. "I wish I could have seen you in the coop. I bet you made a swell pair of jailbirds."

"Laugh all you want to," growled Scoop, "but the Strickers are going to get their pay for this. We didn't do anything to them when they tried to destroy our stuff. And we didn't go after them when they stretched the rope across the canal. But this time they're going to catch it."

We kept the organ grinding away all of the afternoon. The kids enjoyed it. We kept telling them that they would miss the treat of their lives if they passed up seeing the Great Kermann.

Stopping the organ at five-thirty to get supper,

we started it again at seven o'clock. Quite a crowd turned out by eight-thirty. When we gave our show, every seat was taken. The mayor was there with three kids. The fellow with the hungry face separated himself from fifteen cents and decorated one of the seats. Red told us afterwards that the policeman tried to get in for nothing, but was told to "go chase himself."

Scoop went through with his tricks without a hitch. Peg and I had a lot of fun helping him. I didn't spoil the "Living Head" trick by yelling, as I had done at our first show in Tutter.

Red sold sixteen fifteen-cent tickets and thirty-six ten-cent tickets, a matter of six dollars.

We were happy in our success; and in talking about it back and forth it was quickly decided that we should go directly to Steam Corners, instead of camping on Oak Island. If everything was well with our boat at the conclusion of our next show, we would long-distance our folks, begging permission to go farther from home with our show, into the territory beyond Steam Corners. It would be vastly more fun giving shows and earning money than camping. And if we did want to camp for a few days, we could stop at Oak Island on our triumphant return home.

It was our plan to pull out as soon as the show

was over; but before leaving Ashton Scoop and Peg got their heads together and started off into the darkness. They said they were going shopping, to buy some bread and butter. But from their actions I knew that they had another purpose in mind in leaving the boat.

Were they intending to corner the enemy in some dark alley and pass out a few effective black-eye punches? I went worried in the thought of it. Not that I was afraid of the Strickers—far from it. It was the thought of being jailed again, for fighting, that troubled me. We had the mayor's friendship. And I didn't want to lose that friendship by appearing a second time before him as a law breaker.

So it was a big relief to me when I caught the sound of my returning companions' laughing voices. There was another sound, too, that I couldn't place. A sort of gurgling, grunting sound.

I almost fell over in my surprise when the avengers appeared dragging a half-grown pig.

"What the dickens? . . ." I cried, staring.

"It's a present for the Strickers and Uncle Ike," grinned Scoop, panting from his hard work of lugging the big pig.

"What do you mean?" I cried.

The newcomers looked at each other and laughed.

"We've got a peachy scheme, Jerry. We found the pig snooping about in an alley and we're going to take it to the town hall, where our friend Ike and the policeman are gambling with a deck of cards and a box of matches."

Scoop and I happened to be passing the town hall," Peg picked up the story, "when a familiar laugh punctured our ears. Creeping to a window, we peeped in. And there was dear old Ike and the copper gambling their heads off."

"He'll be 'dear old Ike,'" grinned Scoop, "when we get through with him."

"They've got the door locked," Peg went on, "so that no one can come into the room and surprise them at their game, for the policeman, of course, is supposed to be in the street. The Strickers are there, too. That's the best part of all."

"Oh, boy!" yipped Scoop, hugging his stomach in his crazy laughter, "won't there be a scramble, though, when we drop the pig in the window? It'll be worth the two dollars that we paid, Jerry."

Well, we got the boat ready for a hasty getaway, then we gave the pig a thick coat of machine grease. Dumping the greased porker into

a bag, we followed Scoop down a couple of dark alleys to the building where the policeman and the bill poster were gambling with matches. The alleys were dark and we had to move slowly, feeling our way around big boxes and other obstructions. To keep the pig from squealing, we had fastened an old shirt of Peg's over its snout.

When we came to the town hall Scoop pointed out the open window. We crept up and peeped in. The policeman and Ike were seated on opposite sides of a small table. The air was heavy with the stale smoke from a couple of hard-working corncob pipes.

"I'll open it," said Ike, putting in a match.

"I'll stick," said blue jacket, pushing in a match on his side of the table. He studied his hand. "Gimme three cards."

"I'll bet a couple," said Ike, pushing some more matches into the center of the table.

"I'll see you," said blue jacket, "an' raise you one."

Scoop snickered.

"Here's where *we* raise one. Get hold of the bag, fellows. Atta-boy! When I say 'three,' drop the pig into the window. I'll loosen the gag so that he'll be able to give them some nice sweet music."

"I wish we could drop the pig on top of Bid Stricker," giggled Peg.

"Maybe we can," laughed Scoop. "For smarty's sitting almost directly under the window."

Well, we hoisted the porker into the air, dumping it into the room at Scoop's signal. It gave an awful squeal as it landed on the floor. I guess the poker players were almost scared out of their wits.

"Holy cow!" roared blue jacket. "It's a pig."

There was a sound of tumbling chairs and the scurry of feet.

"Some one dumped it in the window," yipped Bid Stricker.

"He's comin' your way, Ike," roared blue jacket. "Grab him."

There was a crash as another chair went down.

"You durn ol' fool!" thundered blue jacket. "Why didn't you hang onto him?"

"I tried to," screeched Ike, "but he got away from me."

"I'll git him."

There was another crash.

"*Ouch!* Jumpin' Jupiter! He's greased."

"I'm plastered with it. Jest look at me!" There was a whine in the high-pitched voice.

WE DUMPED THE PORKER INTO THE ROOM AT SCOOP'S SIGNAL.

Jerry Todd and the Oak Island Treasure. *Page* 104

"It's all your fault, Ham Bickel. I wouldn't 'a' grabbed him if you hadn't made me."

We took a guarded squint into the room. The chairs and table were upset. The matches and cards were scattered every which way on the floor. Scared out of its wits, the pig was dashing first in one direction, then in another. The policeman and the Strickers, with smeared hands and faces, were trying to grab it. But the four-legged scooter, with its coating of grease, had no trouble keeping its freedom.

"We better beat it," Scoop advised. So we streaked it down the alley to the dock. In a jiffy we had the *Sally Ann* untied and the engine churning.

How slowly we moved! Would the policeman hear us making our escape? Would he start after us?

My heart remained in my throat, sort of, until the lights of Ashton disappeared from our sight.

CHAPTER XI

THE MYSTERY THAT CAME WITH THE NIGHT

INTO the night, in the direction of the Oak Island wide waters, four miles ahead, the *Sally Ann* slowly and steadily made its way, the engine throbbing under its load, the rudder squeaking on its rusted hinge pins as Peg moved the tiller first one way then another.

It was our plan to put up for the night within a mile of the big wide waters. Then in the morning, in continuing our passage to Steam Corners, we could conveniently stop at the island and fill our water cask at the spring in the rocks on the island's north side. We really didn't have a cask; what we had for a water container was a pail, but Scoop spoke of it as a cask in shaping our plans. Ships, he told us, always filled their "casks" with water—he never had read in a story of a ship filling its "pail."

We liked to have him talk that way. For it lent an added touch of adventure to our cruise. We could almost imagine, in our talk, that we

were hardened south sea buccaneers bending a course to strike a rendezvous, as they tell about in pirate stories, where needed food and drink awaited us.

Having covered at least three miles in our moonlight passage, we stopped the engine and tied the *Sally Ann* to the stubbed bushes that grew along the water's edge.

It was now close to twelve o'clock. And as we got ready to turn in, removing our shoes and outer clothing for sleeping comfort, we joked back and forth, telling each other that the "friendly ghost" was probably pacing the tow path, impatient for us to settle down for the night so that it could board our boat at the customary midnight hour.

And the funny part is that in our crazy talk we actually got Red scared. When we lay down on the stage, wrapped in our blankets, the frightened one sort of snuggled up to me, hanging to my arm. I didn't shove him away. As a matter of fact I kind of liked his evident dependence in me. It gave me a sort of steady, capable feeling.

There was some final scattered talk about the greased pig and the Strickers. Certainly, we boasted, laughing, we had turned a neat trick. We had outclassed the Strickers in our smartness.

They'd think twice hereafter before electing to pester us.

"If I can find a pig post card in Steam Corners," Scoop laughed, "I'm going to mail it to Bid Stricker. For I don't want him to be in any doubt as to who dropped the greased porker on top of him."

I often think of that night. It seemed to me as I lay in the moonlight, lulled by the gentle night sounds, that the exciting and hazardous things in life were a million miles away. Yet I was to learn, within a very few hours, that perils, grim and deadly, were fast swooping down upon us.

As Scoop said afterwards in recalling our evening's light-hearted fun, those were the last really care-free hours that we enjoyed throughout the remainder of our cruise. After that night things moved swiftly—and the things that happened to us were not pleasant things, as you will learn.

But, as I have pictured in my story in the preceding paragraphs, we went to sleep with untroubled, contented minds. It was a great lark, we told ourselves. Days of hilarious fun lay ahead of us. Even Christopher Columbus' voyage across an uncharted ocean was scarcely less thrilling than this voyage of ours into the canal's hidden haunts.

I must have been asleep for an hour or two. I was having a dream about the engine. I was trying to start it, and couldn't. The other fellows weren't in the dream. I was alone.

After a lot of back-breaking work I managed to get the engine started. As I straightened I could hear the singing put! put! put! of the exhaust. Bending to its task, the engine quickly picked up speed. I could feel the *Sally Ann* quiver as the propeller blades bit into the water. Another such dream, so real and so vivid, I never had had.

Suddenly I sat up, rubbing my eyes. Was I awake? I pinched myself. No, I wasn't dreaming. My mind wasn't sleeping. And what I had dreamt to a result had actually taken place—the *Sally Ann* was under way, was moving slowly down the canal, its motor singing in full speed.

I jumped up. The others were still asleep. So I knew it wasn't one of my chums who had started the engine.

"Wake up," I breathed in Scoop's ear, trembling in my excitement.

"What the dickens? . . ." he gasped, sitting up. He blinked his eyes. "We're moving!"

"Some one's stealing our boat."

He leaped to his feet.

"Where's Red and Peg? They may be playing a joke on us."

I pointed to the two sleepers.

"Get up," Scoop shook them. "We've got a fight on our hands."

"Who—who started the engine?" Red mumbled sleepily.

"That," Scoop gritted, "is what we're going to find out."

The freckled one, now wide awake, went into a frightened panic.

"Oh! . . ." he gurgled. "Maybe it's the—the ghost."

Scoop grunted.

"The Strickers probably. Git a club, fellows. Here's an extra one. Come on."

Peg was directly behind the courageous leader, I came next, then Red. He was hanging to me and gurgling. In other adventures of ours I had seen him scared, but never anything like this. I could feel the thumping of his heart in his grip on my arm. Maybe, though, it was my own heart that I detected.

We tiptoed single file across the scow's pit. It was still moonlight, but the silver light was of no aid to us in identifying the engineer who was running off with our boat, for the motor and tiller

were hidden from our sight by a hanging canvas that we had put up to keep the engine's flying oil from spattering the clothing of our back-row customers.

That a steady hand was holding the tiller we could not doubt. For the scow was keeping its proper course. Yet, as we bent our ears we could detect no human sounds from behind the screen—there were no whispering voices or the scraping of feet on the wooden deck.

Gosh! I began to share Red's panicky fear. For I suddenly realized that there was something ghostly in our experience.

As I say, in my stealthy approach on the curtained engine, I was directly behind Peg. He was close on Scoop's heels. So, when the leader slowly lifted the hanging canvas, I had a clear view of the engine deck over my chums' shoulders.

There was a lantern beside the engine. I saw that it was a lantern that didn't belong to us. From the attracting spot of light I lifted my eyes to the helmsman. And then . . .

We went back in a heap, Red groaning at the bottom of the human pile.

"Did—did you see who it was?" gasped Scoop, gaining his feet.

"The girl in the blue tam," I breathed, dizzy.

Here was an amazing mystery. Our boat was being stolen by a girl. Beyond all doubt she was acting to a purpose. But what that purpose was I could not conceive.

Yet in my dizziness I had a crazy grinning thought. Here we were, four big boys, armed with clubs, creeping up on one lone girl. Four boys, I might add, who were only half dressed.

"Go-osh!" shimmied Red, weak-kneed in his tumbling embarrassment, "where's m-my p-pants?"

CHAPTER XII

THE BURIED TREASURE

We made short work of getting into our clothes—all except Red. Having stepped out of his pants without any recollection of where he had dropped them, he was having a sweating time in their loss. His teeth chattering, a hunted look in his bulging eyes, all he seemed able to say in his embarrassing predicament was: "Where's m-my p-pants? My g-gosh, fellows! Who's got m-my p-pants?"

We finally located the misplaced pants for him and shoved them at him.

"Snap into it," Peg said sharply. "We aren't going to wait for you all night."

"It isn't night," Scoop corrected, squinting at his watch's illuminated dial. "It's two o'clock in the morning."

We had taken note as we dressed that the scow was heading for the big wide waters. And in this discovery our puzzlement deepened. There would have been some excuse for the girl's pres-

ence on the boat if it had been traveling in the direction of her home. But it wasn't. Every minute the boat was taking her farther away from her home. We couldn't understand it.

Was she trying to act smart with us? Was this a trick of hers to show us how much she knew about engines? We were angered in the thought. But we quickly sobered in the earnest conclusion that it was no skylarking whim that had brought her here.

"I began to think," she spoke up, when we had appeared on the engine deck, "that you never were going to wake up."

"How did you get here?" Scoop inquired, staring.

She pointed to a towed rowboat.

"It's one of my grandfather's boats. I was supposed to row all of the way to the island. He told me to. But I—I became frightened, and in my fright I lost my strength. It was so lonely and spooky on the canal . . . I could hear things splash in the water. Then, when I was about to give up, unable to go farther, I came to your boat. Oh! . . . You can't imagine how glad I was. For I knew you would help me."

I saw how white she was.

"Here," I offered quickly, "let me take the tiller."

"What kind of help do you want?" Scoop inquired, when the girl had dropped into a seat on a box.

She didn't make an immediate reply.

"Do you know where Oak Island is?" she spoke finally, lifting her face.

Scoop nodded.

"I have been sent there, in the dark, to bury this," and she pointed to a brass box at her feet.

We stretched our necks at the indicated box, visible in the lantern's light.

"What's in it?" came Scoop's natural inquiry.

"Bonds."

"Liberty Bonds?"

"Twenty of them," the girl said quietly, "worth a thousand dollars apiece."

We stared at the speaker in sudden amazement. For we realized that twenty thousand dollars was a fortune.

"Grandfather and I have been to Oak Island a great many times. Once we camped there a week. And when it became necessary to-night to hide the bonds, to keep them from being stolen, the island was the only place he would consider."

She took a long look into the darkness, in the direction of the left wooded shore. Evidently she recognized her surroundings, for she added in confidence: "We'll soon be there. And I'm supposed to stay there, in hiding, until he comes for me."

Scoop found his voice.

"Twenty thousand dollars!" he cried, staring at the box. He looked up quickly, his eyes narrowed in sudden suspicion. "You aren't stringing us?"

The girl wearily shook her head.

"I've told you the truth, even to the amount of the bonds."

Our leader gave her a queer look.

"How do you know," he said, "that we won't take your bonds away from you and keep them?"

But she didn't seem to hear him.

"I'm sorry," she said, after a moment, "that I flew angry yesterday morning and said cross things to you. I found out later that the white-haired man you mentioned was my Uncle Feddon, my grandfather's brother. It was generally supposed that he was dead. From the time he was a small boy he has been a sort of tramp. The last time he was home he forged Grandfather's name to a check. There was an awful quarrel.

When he went away that night he stole money and papers from the library safe."

Scoop couldn't pry his thoughts from the bonds.

"Your grandfather must be a queer man to keep his money and bonds in the house. My father has some Liberty Bonds, but he keeps them in a bank."

After a moment's flushed hesitation, the girl burst out:

"My grandfather *is* a queer man. He does things that can hardly be explained unless one concludes that his—his mind isn't quite—"

"I understand," Scoop cut in quickly.

"But you mustn't think he's crazy," the girl cried, in added distress. "For he isn't—not a bit of it. He's just queer in a few ways. He should have kept the bonds in the bank. And why they were taken out of the bank is more than I can tell you. In fact, I didn't know they were in the house until he came into my room a few hours ago, telling me that he needed my help. He said he was afraid of my uncle and the other man, both of whom were drinking and quarreling in the kitchen. Given the box of bonds, I was told to take the box to Oak Island and bury it under the big tree on the knoll. 'There are twenty bonds in the box,' Grandfather told me, trembling

with excitement, 'worth a thousand dollars apiece. You must help me hide them where your Uncle Feddon won't ever be able to find them.'

"I asked him why I couldn't take the bonds to Ashton, getting the help of the police. 'No, no!' he cried, more excited than ever. 'You mustn't do that, child. I don't want the Ashton people to know that your uncle is here. They will arrest him. Do as I say. Take the bonds to the island. Bury them. They will be safe from your uncle there. And wait on the island until I come for you.'

"I didn't like to think of going away and leaving him in the house with the quarreling men. So I ran to the garage, awakening the gardener, who sleeps there. Getting a lantern from him, I asked him to go to the house and stay with my grandfather. He asked me why I was up at such a late hour and what I was doing with the brass box. I didn't tell him. Running to the dock, I untied one of the rowboats and started out. I rowed and rowed. I became frightened, as I say, and weak. Coming within sight of your boat, I first thought I would awaken you. I would tell you my story, I decided, and get you to take me to the island. Then I made up my mind to start the engine myself. I wanted to prove to

you," she concluded, looking at Red with the trace of a smile, "that a girl can be *almost* as handy with machinery as a boy."

We were now in the big wide waters. There was a naked shore line to the right of us, barely discernible in the darkness, but on the left there was nothing but an expanse of water as far as our eyes could see. Here the channel was marked with parallel rows of white piles set a hundred feet apart. To get to the island, on our left, it would be necessary for us to make a right-angle turn, passing between the piles on the left-hand side.

This we did successfully by slowing the engine and using poles, carried on the boat for that purpose. The water was shallow outside of the channel. And of no desire to get hung up on a mud bar, we let the boat sort of crawl along in the darkness. The island was ahead of us, a vague black shape, and when we were within two hundred feet of the shore we stopped. Putting out our anchor, we rowed to shore in the girl's boat.

Landing, Peg went ahead with the lantern, leading the way, the rest of us following single file. Taking a winding course amid bowlders and through thickets we came to the island's summit,

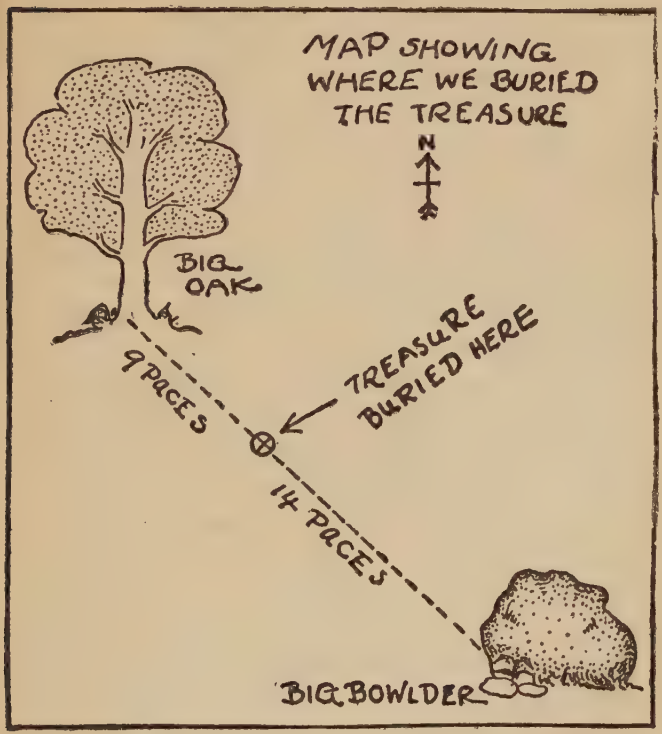
where the granddaughter had been instructed by her queer relative to bury the brass box.

At a spot selected by Scoop we dug a hole about two feet deep, into which the box of bonds was dropped and covered up with loose dirt. There was an unusually large bowlder a short distance away. Having dug our hole in line with the bowlder and the island's largest tree, Scoop now informed us that the spot where the treasure was buried was exactly fourteen paces from the bowlder and nine paces from the tree. I held the lantern while he drew a map of the treasure's hiding place. The girl said this was unnecessary. But, that didn't stop him. It was customary in burying treasure, he said, to make a map of the treasure's hiding place. We wouldn't be doing the job right, he further declared, if we omitted the map. What he drew will be found on the opposite page.

It was now close to four o'clock. No one had any thought of going to sleep; so we decided to bring our food on shore and have an early breakfast.

Scoop and I rowed to the scow, talking and laughing. It was almost unbelievable, we said, that we had just helped a girl bury a twenty-

thousand-dollar fortune in Liberty Bonds. We wondered if we wouldn't wake up, after all, to



learn that our adventure was nothing more than a crazy dream.

Coming within a few yards of the scow, we were startled by a sound of footsteps. Instantly I thought of the ghost, and, reversing my strokes I quickly brought the boat to a stop.

"If it is the ghost," Scoop whispered, squinting at the scow, a squat black patch on the darkened water, "now's our chance to find out who it is."

"I'm like Red," I said, admitting to a lack of courage. "I almost wish I was home."

"Shucks! It's a friendly ghost."

"It was yesterday," I said, with a nervous shrug. "It may be an unfriendly ghost to-day."

He stood up and took a long look ahead.

"Can you see anything, Jerry?"

"Nothing but a black patch."

"I thought I saw something white."

"You probably did," I shivered.

"Row closer."

"Let's wait until daylight."

But he wouldn't listen to me. And reluctantly I dipped the oars in at his orders and brought the rowboat against the scow's side. In another moment he had scrambled on board the big boat, disappearing from my sight.

CHAPTER XIII

AMAZING NEWS

Two—three minutes passed. I could hear Scoop tiptoeing about the boat. He would take a few guarded steps, then pause. I could imagine that he was boring the darkness with his probing eyes and listening for sounds of the ghost. I, too, listened to see if I could hear the ghost. But no sounds came to my sharpened ears other than the stealthy movements of my chum.

The moon, in the time that we had made our way into the big wide waters, had vanished behind a breastwork of clouds. In landing on the island we had worked in darkness, except for the light of the flickering lantern. I realized now that my companion and I should have brought the lantern with us to the scow. It would have given us an advantage in enabling us to see what we were doing and what lay beyond our arm's reach.

I wondered, in a scattered, uneasy way, at the now total absence of the moon. There was something ominous in the depth and silence of the

darkness that engulfed us. And on the moment, keyed up and nervous, I had the crazy imaginative thought that the night was conspiring against us. It was on the ghost's side. The darkness was intended to shield the ghostly intruder from our sight, enabling it to do its work unseen and unhampered.

Its work! I repeated the words in my pondering mind. What was its work? What could be its object in repeatedly coming to the scow? Was it indeed a man as we had thought? Or was it, after all, a spirit from another world?

"Jerry!"

Carried along by my thoughts of ghosts and spirits, I gurgled, startled, as my chum's low sharp voice came out of the darkness a few feet away.

"Let's get out of this," I shivered.

"There's no one here," he declared, talking to me over the side of the scow.

"We heard some one."

"Our ears must have tricked us."

I was still shivering.

"Get in the boat," I urged, "and we'll row back to the island."

"Huh! And what are we going to tell Red and Peg when they ask us where the food is?"

I saw what he meant. He didn't want to go back to the island empty-handed, to be laughed at by our companions. Nor did I, for that matter. It isn't any fun to be called a coward in front of a girl. So I sort of gritted my teeth in dogged courage and joined the other on board the scow.

"What's that out there?" I pointed, breathless.

"Where?"

"Between here and the channel. Looks like a rowboat."

"I see what you mean. . . . It isn't moving."

We strained our eyes at the vague black spot on the water's surface.

"Must be a floating log," Scoop concluded.

I didn't believe that it was a log—I could think of nothing else but a passengerless rowboat. But I didn't argue the matter. I was too anxious to complete our errand on board the scow so that we could get back to shore.

Upon our arrival at the island with the food, the girl sort of took charge of things, in the way women do at picnics. Building a roaring fire on the beach, we had toast and cocoa and fried-cakes and bananas. It was a swell feed.

Watching the others running here and there in the red light of the fire, one with a piece of toast

and another with a fried-cake or a cup of cocoa, I was reminded of that part of the Robinson Crusoe book where the cannibals brought Friday to the island to make soup of him. They had built a fire, just as we had done, and had danced around the blaze while their soup was cooking. Robinson Crusoe, in watching them, had been filled with fear in their presence on the island. I wondered, in a whimsical turn of my thoughts, if, like the dancing cannibals, we were being covertly watched by eyes invisible to us in the darkness.

The sun came up in the time that we were washing the breakfast dishes. We could now see to have some fun. Borrowing the girl's boat, Peg and Red went rowing. It was their plan, they told us, to make a circle of the island, keeping close to shore. There is always fun in doing that, for one can catch glimpses of interesting wild life at the water's edge, beautiful spotted snakes and big bullfrogs and sometimes a long-legged heron or a mud hen.

Left alone, Scoop and I and the girl set out to explore the island afoot. Low and sandy in its western portion, a thicket of willows and scrub oaks, there was a sharp rise to the east, rocky and wooded.

A story is told about a strange hermit who

had lived and died on the island, and in the course of our excursion, having climbed the rocky hill, jumping from one bowlder to another, we came to the cave where, if the hermit story is true, the island's queer early occupant had made his home.

And to view the cave from the inside one could not doubt that it had been an early habitation, for it was not a natural cave, like many of the caves in our section, but had been chiseled out of the white sandstone with unending patience. I know something about caves, and I could imagine, as I stood in this roomy chamber, that its builder had worked many months to complete it to his satisfaction.

After an hour or two of rambling through the island's hidden spots, the girl suggested that we go back to the shore. It wasn't improbable, she explained, that her grandfather would appear at any moment.

Peg and Red returned from their trip around the island, hilarious in the capture of an old gee-whacker of a snapping turtle. It was now bearing hard on nine o'clock. I noticed that the leader was moving restlessly up and down the sandy shore, looking at the anchored scow one moment and peering in the direction of the canal's

channel the next. At his signal I followed him into the thicket. Crossing the island to the north shore, we had a drink at the spring in the rocks, then seated ourselves on the trunk of a fallen tree at the water's edge.

"It's time for us to start," he said, looking at me with a troubled face.

I saw what was on his mind. He didn't like the idea of pulling out at nine o'clock, as we had planned to do, leaving the girl alone on the island.

"We might take her with us," I suggested, hating the thought of giving up our proposed show.

He shook his head.

"I don't believe she'd consent to that. I know *I* wouldn't," he waggled, "if *I* had been sent here on an errand such as hers. I'd feel that it was my duty, sort of, to stay close to the buried bonds."

In our further talk it was made plain to us that we could do one of three things: Stay on the island with the girl until the grandfather came; proceed to Steam Corners at the time appointed, leaving her unattended on the island; or take her with us.

When we put the matter up to her she laughingly told us that we were making a mountain out of a molehill. Her grandfather, she declared, would soon put in an appearance. And until he came she was perfectly safe on the island. With a slightly clouded forehead and a determined set of her mouth she told us, in conclusion, that she would be both annoyed and provoked if we changed our plans on her account. It wasn't to be thought of.

"And you're dead sure," Scoop hung on, wanting to do the right thing, "that you won't be scared to stay here alone until your grandfather appears?"

"Scared?" She gave a scornful laugh and sort of boastingly squared her shoulders. "I should say not. What is there to be scared of? As I told you last night, I've been here dozens of times. I know where the spring is, so I won't have to go thirsty. And if a shower comes up, I'll run for the cave."

"You haven't anything to eat," our leader reminded.

"Grandfather will bring something."

"He might not get here for several hours."

"Well," the girl laughed, giving her curls a

saucy toss in the persistent one's face, "if you're really afraid that I'll starve, you can leave me a dill pickle and a toothpick."

"There's a chunk of boiled ham on the scow," Scoop told her. "We'll get it and you can make yourself some sandwiches."

But Red couldn't put his hands on the ham when he was sent after it.

"You fellows must have ate it," he yipped to us across the water.

"If any one ate it you did," Scoop yipped back. "It was there last night."

The searcher disappeared for another moment or two.

"You're crazy," he yipped. "There isn't any sign of a ham here. I've looked everywhere."

"He's the limit," Scoop grumbled to us, showing his disgust of the other. "Honest to Peter, he wouldn't be able to find his nose if it wasn't hinged to the front of his freckled face. *I* could find the ham," he boasted, "if *I* was there."

"Here's a glass of dried beef," Red yipped from the scow. "I'll bring that."

Well, we left the girl a bottle of olives and some crackers in addition to the dried-beef sandwiches that she made for herself. Then we went on board the scow in her rowboat.

In saying good-by to us she told us that her name was Elizabeth Garber, and taking down our names on the back of her buried-treasure map she promised that her grandfather would write to us, thanking us for the help we had given her.

"And when you get home," she concluded, pink spots showing in her cheeks at the suggestion, "you might write me a nice long letter telling me about your adventures and your wealth."

"Sure thing we will," Scoop promised. "How do you want us to address the letter," he grinned, " 'Elizabeth' or 'Betty' or just plain 'Liz'?"

The questioned one matched the questioner's grin.

"You can take your pick of the three names," she laughed.

"We'll make it 'Liz,' " Scoop laughed.

It disgusted Red to think that we should thus talk to a girl. And to get rid of her he started the engine. When we had reached the channel, having passed through the piles, making a right-angle turn to the left, we could see her sitting in her green rowboat waving her handkerchief.

When we were well on our way the leader suddenly remembered about the misplaced ham and gave himself the job of finding it. But in this he was no more successful than Red had been.

As a consequence his face was sheepish when he returned to us empty handed.

"Honest, fellows, don't you know where the ham is?"

Peg and I and Red shook our heads.

"It was under the engine deck last night," the defeated one told us. "But it isn't there now."

That a thief had been on board the boat we could not doubt. And in the thought the leader gave me a queer look.

"Evidently, Jerry, our 'friendly ghost' has sticky fingers."

"What do you mean?" Peg inquired quickly.

Scoop told the other two about the scare that he and I had had before daylight.

"And you think it was the ghost who stole the ham?"

"Who else could it have been?"

A hungry ghost! There was humor in the thought. But our laughter was touched with uneasiness. For the ghost's repeated visits to the boat was fast putting an edge on our nerves.

Peg had held to the troubled thought that we might have some difficulty in steering the *Sally Ann* through the Steam Corners lock. But we didn't. It was as easy as pie. The lock tender, a stoop-shouldered, talkative old man, saw us

coming and had the gate open. We ran into the lock under slow power and were quickly raised to the canal's higher level.

Just before we got to Steam Corners Red discovered that he had used up the last of the engine oil, so when we drew up at the town dock, close to the bridge, he went in search of a garage.

The rest of us busied ourselves preparing dinner. But before the meal was half ready the freckled one came into sight on the run, with a look on his spotted face that almost scared the wits out of us.

He had his can of oil in one hand and a newspaper in the other. He had picked up the newspaper in the garage where he bought the oil, he panted, pointing to a heading on the front page.

GRANDDAUGHTER COMES UP MISSING WITH VALUABLE BONDS

Aged Relative in Hospital With Head Wound

Well, our hearts were in our throats, sort of, as we read the astonishing newspaper article. Steven Garber, the article stated, a retired banker, had been mysteriously assaulted in his summer home near Ashton, Illinois. The

gardener, summoned to the house in the middle of the night by the aged man's granddaughter, had found his employer in a pool of blood on the kitchen floor, near to death from a vicious head wound. It was known that the attacked financier had been keeping a large sum in Liberty Bonds in the house, and as the bonds had disappeared it was the theory of the police that the valuable certificates had been stolen by the granddaughter, Elizabeth Garber, who was being sought in the belief that she held the key to the mystery of the attempted murder. It was the twelve-year-old granddaughter who had awakened the gardener in his sleeping quarters in a detached garage, begging him to go immediately to the house, where, so he was told, he was needed by his employer. It was upon the gardener's entrance into the house a few minutes later that the unconscious form on the kitchen floor had been discovered. The granddaughter, carrying a brass box in which it was believed that she had placed the missing Liberty Bonds, had escaped in the night in a rowboat. The police were bending every effort to apprehend her. In the meantime the assaulted grandparent was being cared for in the Ashton hospital. The man's head wound, the article concluded, was not essentially serious.

Having read the article to its completion, we stared at one another in amazement. We knew, of course, who had struck the blow that had sent the grandfather to the floor unconscious. Without a doubt it was the rascally brother. Yet no mention of the brother and his warty-nosed companion was given in the article. It would almost seem that aside from us and the girl and the unconscious man in the hospital that no one knew that the two men had been in the house.

"What are we going to do?" Peg cried, bewildered.

"I think we ought to go back to the island," Scoop said, as dizzy looking as the other. "The girl should be told of what has happened to her grandfather. Otherwise she may wait at the island for him for several days. Besides, the bonds are in danger. She'll need our help to get them safely into a bank."

The danger to the bonds, the leader then explained, lay in the possibility of the rascally uncle getting to the island ahead of us. No doubt the evil-minded one had found out about the bonds before he had struck his brother down; he might even have compelled the helpless brother to disclose the vanished granddaughter's intended destination.

Yes, it was to be a race to see who could get to the island first—and we thrilled in the thought of the probable adventure that lay ahead of us. If we could get our hands on the brass box, we were confident that we would be able to keep any one from getting it away from us. Our great fear lay in the thought that we would get to the island too late.

In the time that we had been excitedly talking back and forth, a uniformed policeman had come onto the canal bridge, stopping to give us a curious questioning eye. Of course he didn't know our secret, else he would have straightway arrested us. At least that was our frightened thought. And fearful that we might be questioned, we quickly loosened the boat's tie rope and cranked the engine.

Backing up until we came to a small wide waters on the edge of the town, we turned the scow around, then headed for the island under an open throttle.

CHAPTER XIV

CAPRICORN HEBRIDES WINDBIGLER

It had taken us the better part of two and one-half hours to make the run from Oak Island to Steam Corners, a distance of possibly five miles. That was slow traveling, to be sure. But, as I have said before, the *Sally Ann* was not a speed boat. Not unlike a clumsy old work horse, it could be made to go just about so fast and not much faster. The thing it was least acquainted with was speed.

Still, we were hopeful that we would be able to shorten the time of our return trip by at least thirty minutes, which would get us into anchorage off the island at two-fifteen or thereabouts. And it was to accomplish this, if possible, that we were now running the propeller full speed. This, of course, was hard on the engine. Worn in its many joints from long usage, it was liable to break down at any moment. But our errand was urgent. We had to take some chances.

As Scoop stated at the time, we probably could

have made faster passage to the island in a rented rowboat. But we didn't like the thought of leaving our show boat behind. It would have required a guard, and that would have demanded a division of our forces. We wanted to stick together; we felt that we should stick together in the interests of our own safety. If it came to a hand-to-hand fight, a not improbable turn of affairs, four of us could put up a better battle than three of us.

Shortly after one o'clock we came within sight of the lock that we had passed through two hours earlier. The lock tender was waiting for us. I could imagine, as we approached the lock under full speed, that the old man was surprised to see us back so soon. For we had told him that morning that we were going to dock in Steam Corners to give our show and stay there over night.

"Um . . . What you b'ys doin' headin' this way?" he inquired, regarding us in turn with narrowed eyes.

"Oh," Scoop said airily, of no mind to take the other into our confidence, "we're just riding around for the fun of it."

"Goin' back to Ashton?"

"Maybe."

There was a moment's silence, in which a look

of undisguised suspicion came into the narrowed eyes.

"Um . . . Calc'late you fellers better come up to my office an' sign your names in my book."

"'Book'?" Scoop repeated, regarding the other quizzically.

"Maybe it's a cook book," was Red's smart remark.

"No," the old man waggled, setting his long shaggy hair into motion, "it hain't no cook book. It's a ledger in which I keep a record of the people who pass through my lock."

"You didn't say anything about it this morning," Scoop reminded.

"Didn't I? Wal, my memory hain't always the best."

"If it isn't necessary," Scoop said, impatient to get through the lock, "we'd rather not bother with it. For we're in a hurry."

The narrowed eyes snapped.

"In a hurry, hey? Thought you jest said you was a-ridin' 'round fur the fun of it."

Our leader laughed.

"Well, bring out your birthday book and we'll autograph it."

"It's in my office," the old man waggled. "Jest come this way an' I'll show you whar 'tis. You

kin be a-signin' it while I put your boat through the lock."

Well, we never suspected a trap. Unfamiliar with the duties of a lock tender it never occurred to us that there was anything queer or irregular in the old man's request of our signatures in his book. At his direction we cheerfully followed him into the house that he occupied on the canal bank and up a flight of stairs to a sort of attic bedroom.

"If you go over thar," our stoop-shouldered conductor pointed, indicating a table near the room's only window, "you'll find the book an' a pen."

Peg was the first one to reach the table.

"I can't find a book with names in it," he grumbled, feeling around among the table's contents.

Scoop looked over his shoulder to make sure that our conductor had gone downstairs.

"Maybe," he laughed softly, tapping his head, "the old gent's cuckoo."

Red wiped his sweaty face on his shirt sleeve.

"Holy cow, it's hot up here!"

"There's no book here," Peg declared, with an impatient grunt.

"Lookit!" pointed the freckled one, in a sudden unnerving discovery. "The door's shut."

"What the dickens? . . ." cried Scoop, dashing across the room. "Hey!" he cried, shaking the bolted door and pounding on its heavy panels with his fists. "What's the idea of locking us in?"

"Quit your poundin' on that door," the lock tender roared from the foot of the stairs, "or I'll put a charge of bird shot through the floor into your feet."

"Let us out," cried Scoop.

"You'll be let out, all right . . . when my brother Ham gits here with four pairs of handcuffs."

"You'll lose your job for this," screeched Scoop, furious. "For you have no right to lock us up."

"I hain't got no right, hey? Mebby you young scallawags don't know who I be. Um . . . I'm a deputy sheriff, let me tell you."

"Being a deputy sheriff," cried Scoop, "doesn't give you a right to lock up innocent people. And you better let us out of here in a hurry, if you know what's good for you."

A bell jingled in the lower room as our captor wound up the crank of his country telephone.

"Gimme Ashton two-six-six-four," he ordered gruffly. "Hello. That you, Ham? Yep, it's me —Herm. Yep. Say, you know them young fellers that put the greased pig in your windy—yep, the ones you called me up about at dinnertime. I told you they'd gone on to Steam Corners. Wal, they just come back an' I'm a-holdin' 'em fur you. Yep, got 'em shet in the attic bedroom. What's that? You can't come over till to-morrow? You're lookin' fur who? A gal? No, I hain't seen nothin' of a gal in a green rowboat. What's that? She tried to murder her grandfather? Pshaw! A twelve-year-old gal! Kin you imagine it? Wal, if I see her I'll hold 'er. Git over as early as you kin to-morrow. No, you needn't worry 'bout that. If they do try to escape I'll fill their legs with bird shot. I've give 'em fair warnin' an' they'll have better sense 'an to try it. So long."

We hadn't said a word in the time that our captor was telephoning. And it was well for us, as we now realized, that we had given the one-sided conversation close attention. For we had thus learned the cause of our arrest.

"They're after us for the greased-pig trick," Scoop said, searching our eyes in turn. "What do you know about that?" he whistled.

"I thought it was for helping the girl," Peg said, studying.

"So did I."

There was a moment's silence.

"Dog-gone!" the leader burst out, with flushed cheeks. "Weren't we the champion boobs, though, to walk into that old hayseed's trap? Got us up here to sign a book! Slick, all right. But I thought we were too smart to get tripped up by a trick like that. Gr-r-r-r-r!" and the angry speaker gritted his teeth. "It makes me furious to think that we didn't have sense enough to suspect the truth."

"We were asleep at the switch, all right," Peg agreed, nodding dismally.

Red set up a howl.

"I wish I was home."

"Huh!"

"I don't want to go to jail."

"Who's going to jail?"

"We are. Didn't you hear what he said about handcuffs?"

"They can't put us in jail for breaking up a poker game with a greased pig," the leader waggled, his jaw squared. "We may have to pay a fine, but that's nothing to worry about. A bigger concern in my mind is the girl."

"*I* don't believe," Peg spoke up, thoughtful, "that they have a right to arrest us outside of town for the pig trick. It looks to me like spite work on the policeman's part."

Scoop passed quickly to the open window, to learn, I imagine, if there was any chance of escape for us in that direction.

"Lookit!" he pointed.

Below us, comfortably seated in the shade of a tree, a shotgun in his lap, the lock tender was contentedly munching a big rosy apple.

"You b'ys comfortable up thar?" he drawled, getting sight of us in the window.

"We could use a few palm-leaf fans to good advantage," Scoop hinted, swabbing his dripping face.

"Calc'late it'll git cooler toward evenin'."

"When do we eat?" Peg called down.

"Hungry, hey?"

"We haven't had any dinner."

"Wal, it's too late fur dinner now."

Scoop again gritted his teeth.

"The old beast!"

"Say," Peg began to dicker, "what'll you take to turn us loose?"

"Um . . . Tryin' to bribe me, hey?"

"We'll give you five dollars."

THE LOCK TENDER WAS COMFORTABLY SEATED IN THE SHADE, A SHOTGUN IN HIS LAP.

Jerry Todd and the Oak Island Treasure. *Page* 144

"I hain't a man with a price."

"How about ten dollars?"

"Yep," the old man waggled, munching his rosy apple, "it's a powerful hot day."

"I didn't say anything about the weather," Peg growled, flushing. "I asked you if you'd let us out of here for ten dollars."

"Yep, you're right. We hain't had a hotter day in ten years."

Scoop caught our big chum's eyes.

"You might as well save your breath," he advised.

"Anyway," I sweltered, "he told the truth about the heat. This room is a regular oven."

Whenever I see a panting dog I am unhappily reminded by its dripping tongue and heavy breathing of our confinement that afternoon in the lock tender's attic bedroom. We didn't exactly hang out our tongues, dog-fashion, but we did strip off the most of our clothes. The heat from the low sun-baked roof was almost unbearable. You could have imagined from our dribbling perspiration that we had just been taking a sponge bath and hadn't dried off.

Following our unsatisfactory conversation with our jailer, we explored our prison in the hope that we would find some avenue to possible safe es-

cape. Besides the table and bed the room contained three chairs and a bureau. The plastered, heat-soaked walls and hipped ceiling were decorated with fancy old-fashioned wallpaper, against which, on opposite sides of the bed, were hung framed samplers. One read: "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." The other said: "I slept and dreamt that life was beauty; I woke to find that life was duty."

We met with nothing but discouragement in our exploration of the room. And abandoning the hope of making an immediate escape, we dropped on the floor near the window. Tortured by the heat, we were thirsty, too, and hungry. Here it was about two o'clock in the afternoon and we had had nothing to eat since four o'clock in the morning.

We had now given up all hope of getting to the island in time to help the girl save her Liberty Bonds from the rascally uncle's hands. Helpless in our sweltering prison, we could picture in our tortured minds what was very probably taking place on the island. The men's arrival . . . the girl's capture . . . the search for the bonds. The girl would be compelled, under torture, if necessary, to reveal the treasure's hiding place. And with the bonds in their possession, the two

thieves could very easily put many miles between themselves and the island before nightfall.

Would the girl be left alone on the island? Or would the thieves take her away with them? We wondered, depressed and discouraged.

Suddenly we experienced new life at the sound of a lilting voice. Crowding in the window, we had a clear view of the buoyant singer as he came jauntily into the yard.

It was the man with the warty nose!

We stared from the window, amazed and speechless. What was the thief doing here? Where was his companion? Were the two men now making their escape into an adjoining county, after having been to the island? Was the white-haired man waiting near by with the recovered bonds? Was the girl with him?

We were crazy in our helplessness. For here was a not improbable chance for us to outwit the evil-minded pair and recover the stolen bonds. Fortune had favored us in bringing the thieves here with their probable booty. But we were powerless to take advantage of what fortune seemed to offer. As prisoners, we could do not a thing except to look down from our jail window.

Approaching the seated lock tender with jaunty

steps, the newcomer removed his shabby hat and made a sweeping bow, his left hand pressed against his heart.

"Good day, sir; good day. I observe that you are taking it cool and comfortable in the shade, as a man in your favored circumstances should. It is very warm in the sun, sir, and fatiguing to one afoot."

"Um . . . Stranger, hain't you?"

"My name, sir, is Windbigler—Capricorn Hebrides Windbigler. You, sir, may have read of the Windbiglers in the annals of science. My father, like my learned grandfather, was a geographer of exceptional attainments. At my birth in the New Hebrides Islands, in the South Pacific Ocean, I was given, under the dictation of our family's distinguished geographical specialist, the somewhat appropriate name of Capricorn Hebrides. A tribute, my illustrious parent considered, to his beloved profession. Alas, sir, you see in me nothing of the greatness of my learned and distinguished parent and grandparent. I may even in my appearance seem a bit shabby to you. But, to apply an old axiom, sir, not inappropriate to the occasion, it is not the clothes that make the piano tuner. Here, sir, is my professional card. When you have perused it I will kindly ask you

to return it, for it is the last one I have. Though it is somewhat soiled from daily usage, I trust that its printed message will stand out before your eyes like a beacon in the wilderness. Capricorn Hebrides Windbigler, the Harmony Hustler. Behold in me, sir, the true friend and ardent supporter of our greatest American institution—the parlor piano."

The lock tender, in the time of this long-winded recital, had been listening with an open mouth.

"Say," he demanded, when the talkative one had paused for breath, "what in Sam Hill be you spoutin' 'bout, anyway?"

"Sir," gravely bowed the visitor, "I am, in simple, unflowered English, an itinerant piano tuner. Some days I tune many pianos . . . for my meals. On the days when I have no pianos to tune, I—er—acknowledge to the pangs of hunger. This, unhappily, is one of the days when my artistic attainments have had no chance of commercial expression. As the son of the late Ferdinand Windbigler—and I would have you know sir, that my esteemed parent was named after the consort of the illustrious Queen Isabella —it pains me, humiliates me, in fact, to be compelled, in my present reduced circumstances, to confess to you that I am sadly in need of such

stimulating food as a baked potato and a crust of bread. And unless you have a piano, sir, that I may tune, to recompense you for the hearty meal that I—aw—hope to get, I dread to contemplate the early misery that my empty stomach will endure."

"Great balls of fire!" exploded the listener, blinking his eyes in bewilderment at the flow of words. "Don't you ever run down?"

"Sir!"

"By gum, you're the windiest talker I ever heerd tell of. Windjammer's a good name fur you, all right. Windjammer! Hee! hee! hee!"

"Windbigler, sir," came the dignified correction.

"It hain't every tramp stoppin' here fur a handout thet's got sech a lingo as you have. I never seed your beat."

"My dear sir . . . a tramp! . . . you quite distress and embarrass me. In the words of my esteemed father, the late Ferdinand Wind——"

"Shet up!"

The Harmony Hustler bowed humbly.

"I, sir, am 'shet,' as you so excellently put it."

"So you're a pianny tuner, hey?"

"A musical phonologist, sir, at your service."

"Wal," the lock tender spit, "I've got a pianny."

"I could imagine that to be the case, sir. For it has been my experience that where there is music in the home, the countenances therein always have a nobler mien. And as I approached you, sir, and gazed into your kindly countenance, I said to myself——"

"Shet up, I tell you. Land of Goshen! *Sech* a talker! If I was compelled to live in the same house with you I'd wear ear pads, by gum."

"I grieve, sir, if I have bored you."

"I've got a pianny, as I jest said. Bought it at a sale two years ago fur twenty-two dollars an' a quarter. A good pianny, too. One of them four-legged kind. Since my wife's death I hain't had no use fur it. Bin tryin' to sell it." The speaker got to his feet. "Come in," he invited, holding the shotgun in the hollow of his left arm, "an' take a look at it. An' if you kin fix it up so I kin sell it fur what I've got in it, I'll give you your supper an' a night's lodgin'."

We stared at one another as the two men disappeared from our sight. The warty-nosed man's conduct, like his presence here, filled us with bewilderment.

There was a stovepipe hole in the floor of our prison. And as the two men came into the room below us, we got around the hole in a circle, unmindful now of the heat in our interest in what was going on below us.

CHAPTER XV

UNDER THE BED

Scoop and Peg were bitterly angry over our arrest and imprisonment in the lock tender's attic bedroom. Red was scared. I was neither angry nor scared, but worried.

What gave me that feeling was the unhappy thought that it wouldn't please Mother and Dad a little bit to learn, upon my return home, that I had been picked up twice in daily succession by the law. To be arrested, even when one is innocent, is something of a disgrace. Jails and prisons are things that any right-minded boy should keep away from. I was sorry now that I had been led into the greased-pig trick. I realized, when it was too late, that we had made a foolish blunder in trying to get funny with the law.

Upon the appearance of the talkative, warty-nosed man, my worries had taken a scattered, anxious turn. I had the feeling that the evil-minded one had a hidden purpose in coming here. I didn't believe his crazy story about being born on

an island in the Pacific Ocean. And he wasn't half as anxious to get the job of tuning the lock tender's piano as he let on. He was after something else. His exaggerated piano-tuning talk was just a blind.

Were *we* the "something else"? Did our presence in the house, as prisoners, have something to do with the hidden purpose of his visit? This was not a comfortable thought to me. Involved in the theft of the Liberty Bonds (we still held to the thought that the evil pair had stolen the bonds from their hiding place on the island and that the other thief was waiting near by with the booty) he plainly was a dangerous man. More than that he was a *deep* man, as the saying is. His flowery put-on conversation with the lock tender coupled with his acting had proved that. I had no desire to come under his power, either as a friend or an enemy. I was afraid of him. I wished with all my heart that he was a thousand miles away.

As I wrote down in the concluding paragraph of the preceding chapter, there was a stovepipe hole in the floor of our prison. And the entrance of the two men into the house had found us on our stomachs on the floor with our noses hung over the hole's edge. It wasn't a big hole—not

more than six inches in diameter. And to see into the lower room we had to bring the tops of our heads together, each one sort of pushing forward to hold his place.

The Harmony Hustler, as he had elected to introduce himself into the house as a part of his hidden scheme, let on that he was awfully tickled at sight of an old-fashioned square piano that stood in one corner of the sitting room. He sort of patted it here and there, even on its big round legs, as though he was wildly in love with every part of it, calling it a "magnificent old instrument—a patriarch of piano art," and a lot of other silly truck like that.

"I don't know," the lock tender spoke up, "if you kin play a tune on it or not. Fur a rat got in it last winter an' made a nest in it. An' one day the ol' cat she got a whiff of mister rat an' got in whar the varmint was, an' then, let me tell you, they was *some* action. By gum, I never heerd sech a whangin' an' a bangin' an' a discordin' in all my born days. They was bass notes an' sopranny notes an' rat whiskers an' cat fuzz flyin' every which way." The speaker paused to spit through the doorway. "The ol' cat she licked. Yes, sir, by gum, she jest naturally cleaned that ol' rat's bones as slick as a polished darn needle.

Smart cat, mister. She hain't furgot 'bout that ol' rat, nuther. No, sir. Every day or so she gits in the pianny an' goes thumpin' up an' down the strings. As I tell my neighbors, the fust thing I know I'll have a cat pianny player an' kin start up a side show an' git rich. Purty slick idea, hey? Hee! hee! hee!"

The Harmony Hustler gave himself a sort of vague look.

"How—aw—quaint and interesting, sir."

"An' that hain't all my ol' cat kin do—you jest watch now."

Putting a silver thimble in the middle of the sitting-room floor, the animal's proud owner went to the door and called: "Kitty, kitty, kitty, kitty!" And pretty soon a big black and white cat bounded into the room, with an arched back and fluffy tail. It seemed instantly to get its eyes on the shiny thimble. Pouncing on the silver finger piece, it took the thimble in its mouth to the furnace register and dropped it through the iron grating.

"Meow!" it said, looking up at its beaming master as though in expectation of another toy.

"Hain't that smart?" the lock tender cackled. "Does it every time, by gum! Thimbles an' spools an' buttons—they all go down the register

when ol' Spotty gits a whack at 'em. Eh, Spotty?" and he affectionately rubbed the purring cat's arched back.

"I should imagine, sir, that you—aw—have quite a collection of articles in your furnace pipe."

The cat fondler looked up quickly.

"Oh! . . . I git the stuff out ag'in," he waggled.

The Harmony Hustler studied the iron grating.

"By removing the register, I presume."

"Naw. I go down cellar an' reach my arm in the air pipe."

There was a momentary queer, smug expression on the visitor's face as he regarded the furnace register—a sort of appraising look—then he seated himself on the wabbly stool and prepared to give the piano a tryout. In the way that he posed, with his shoulders thrown back and his chin thrust up, I could think of nothing but a conceited rooster getting ready to crow. Spreading out his long, slim fingers, he brought his hands down on the keyboard with an awful thump.

"Tra-LA-LA-LA-LA-*A-A!*" he boomed, hanging onto the last high "la" until the horrified pictures on the sitting-room wall bulged their glassy eyes and squirmed in agony. "You have here, as

I said a moment ago, sir, a most magnificent old instrument. Tra-LA-LA-LA-LA-*A-A!*"

"By gum," grinned the lock tender, amused at the performance, "you kin make more noise than the cat."

The Harmony Hustler unloaded a dozen or more tools from his bulging pockets and briskly removed the piano's wooden top, thus exposing the encased strings. In his work he kept going "Tra-la-lee-tra-la-lum!" but not at the peak of his voice as he had done when he was batting the keyboard. He let on that his whole heart was in his work. But he didn't fool *me*. And watching him I wondered why his eyes constantly sought the furnace register. Was he thinking of the cat? It would seem so.

Well, the better part of an hour went by. The worker would tighten a string and then thump its key, seemingly tuning the string to the lilt of his booming voice. Of course he couldn't make his voice sound the very high and the very low notes. But he covered a wide range of the keyboard, let me tell you.

Finally he straightened from his work.

"There, sir," he beamed, posing, "the job is done—a Capricorn-Hebrides-Windbigler job, sir,

than which—I say it in proper modesty—there is none better." He jiggled his fingers around among the keys. "You will notice the vast improvement in the tone of your instrument, sir—the exquisite harmony. I strike this chord, and the colorful tones conjure up in our minds a picture of a hidden lane in a deep forest. The damp tang of the woodland lies heavy in our nostrils. Now we approach a bank of gorgeous yellow tulips. I strike these minor chords . . . gently . . . gently . . . and we pluck the yellow blossoms, one . . . by . . . one."

The lock tender was laughing up his sleeve at the silly performance.

"By gum, Windbag, they ought to take you an' make you 'quainted with the inside of a padded cell."

Gathering up his tools, the Harmony Hustler fumbled with a small wrench, letting the tool fall through the furnace register. Watching him from above, we thought that he had dropped the wrench by accident. We were soon to learn, however, that the act was intentional.

"Dear me! I do believe, sir, that I have lost one of my prized wrenches down your register." He got on his knees and peered anxiously through

the iron grating. "I seem wholly unable to see it, sir. But I quite assure you that I heard it fall."

The lock tender was grinning at the seemingly distressed one.

"What be you tryin' to do?—imitate my cat?"

"Dear me! What shall I do?"

"Windbubbler, you're dumb, if I must say so."

"I beg pardon? . . ."

"D-u-m-b," the lock tender spelt. "I mean you don't know much, outside of a few pianny tricks."

"My dear sir! . . ."

The householder waggled in disgust that the other shouldn't have remembered what he had said about being able to get into the register pipe from the cellar.

"Wal, I suppose we've got to have all kinds of people in this world, simple an' otherwise. . . . I'll git your wrench fur you."

At the disappearance of the householder into the cellar, the Harmony Hustler got quickly on his knees and began sounding the piano's big wooden legs with his knuckles. Working quickly, he passed to the third leg, the one in back on the right-hand side. Here he seemed to find what he was searching for. We heard him excitedly catch his breath. And his hands trembled as he

locked them around the big leg, giving it a sharp twist to the left. We saw the leg turn. He was unscrewing it!

Following a tinny rattle of furnace pipes in the cellar, heavy steps sounded on the stairs. Jumping nimbly to his feet, the queer acting one was dreamily running his snaky fingers up and down the keyboard when the other man came into the room with the recovered thimble and wrench.

As I have said, it was my earlier belief that the warty-nosed thief's visit to the house had been occasioned by our presence there as prisoners. But now I was made to realize, from what I had just witnessed, that he was more interested in the marked piano leg than he was in us. It was to get a chance to secretly inspect the piano's legs that he had tricked the instrument's owner into the cellar.

Here was a new mystery. What was there in connection with the marked piano leg to attract the thief to the house? In what way did the marked leg differ from the other legs? Was it in the sound? And now that the thief had made some kind of a discovery, what step was he planning to take next?

Intensely interested in what had taken place in the sitting room, I had given no attention to

my companions, and therefore hadn't missed Peg at the stovepipe hole.

But in the disappearance of our jailer into the cellar, our big chum had jumped to his feet, extracting from the bureau several folded bed sheets. Tearing the sheets into strips, he had twisted the strips into a rope, one end of which now dangled out of the window.

"Come on, fellows," the worker panted, calling our attention to the way that he had opened to probable freedom.

We weren't blind to the risk that we would run in escaping down the bed-sheet rope. If we were detected in our descent by our jailer we probably would get a charge of bird shot in our legs. But in our crazy eagerness to get away from our hated prison we were willing to run any kind of a risk.

Before going through the window Red grabbed his pants and shirt, for, as I have said, we were all more or less undressed. I was slow in finding my pants, so Peg, the next one dressed, went out through the window and down the rope, scooting, with the freckled one, in the direction of the underbrush on the canal bank.

I still hadn't been able, in my excitement, to find my misplaced pants. So Scoop prepared to make his escape from the room ahead of me.

Below us the Harmony Hustler was chasing his fingers up and down the keyboard. We were thankful for the music for it enabled us to go quickly about the room without the danger of attracting attention to our movements.

Our jailer, seemingly charmed by the piano's music, was contentedly rocking back and forth in a big chair in the middle of the room. I sort of laughed to myself as I squinted at him through the stovepipe hole. We were putting it over on him! I could imagine his later bellowing rage at the discovery of our clever flight.

Bang!

I almost jumped out of my skin at the crashing sound.

"Hey!" our jailer roared from below, leaping to his feet. "What in Sam Hill be you kids doin' up thar?"

In preparing to climb over the sill, Scoop clumsily had let the window fall. Frantic, he was now trying to raise it, so that we could make our escape down the rope before our jailer got into the room. But the window had stuck tightly in its sharp fall. He couldn't budge it.

I saw in a flash that we were trapped. Our predicament filled me with shivers. We would suffer double, Scoop and I, for our luckier com-

panions' escape. In his rage, our jailer might even turn his shotgun on us.

I didn't want to be shot. It was an awful thought. And in a panic I darted my horrified eyes around the room for a possible barricade. The bed! My eyes came to it and stopped. I had hid under beds more than once in my lifetime! And here was an especially good bed to hide under, for its white fringed spread hung low on the sides.

The jailer turned the key in the door's lock. But in the time that the door was being thrown open, I vanished, pantless, Scoop after me, under the bed.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SECRET OF THE PIANO LEG

"JUMPIN' Jupiter! Great balls of fire! The little scallawags has escaped!"

Scoop nudged me under the bed as our furious jailer tore up and down the room like a crazy man.

I knew what was in my companion's mind. He was tickled in the thought that it had been taken for granted, from the seeming vacancy of the room, that we had vanished from our prison.

The crazy acting one was now at the window.

"Yes, sir, by gum, they made a rope out of my best bed sheets—the little villains!—an' got away through the windy. What do you know about that? An' me a-sittin' downstairs all the while with my hands folded like a' ol' dumb-bell. My best sheets! *Wough!* If I had my hands on 'em I'd shake the pants off em, by gum. Yes, sir . . . *Hey!* What's this? A pair of pants! An' after me sayin' . . . Money in the pockets, too.

Five, ten, twenty, twenty-five, thirty dollars. An' here's eight more dollars in another pocket."

Scoop made a queer throat sound.

"Jerry, is he counting *our* money?"

"I guess so," I whispered back, miserable in the loss of our working capital and profits. He had my eight dollars, too.

"What in the dickens did you drop your pants for? If you aren't a peach!"

I stiffened.

"Huh! Who let the window drop?"

That shut him up.

"Lookit all the money I've got," our jailer cackled, when the Harmony Hustler came hesitatingly into the room.

"Well, well!"

"One of the kids was in sech a hurry to clean out that he furgot his pants. I found the money in the pocket."

"Did you have some boys confined in this room, sir?"

The lock tender must have nodded in answer to the question.

"That's what makes me feel so all-fired cheap —to be done this way by a parcel of boys in knee pants."

"I wonder . . ." The Harmony Hustler

paused. "May I inquire, sir, if your prisoners were four youths in charge of a show boat?"

Scoop got my ear.

"He hasn't forgotten us, Jerry."

The lock tender must have answered the other man with another nod.

"I've got their boat. An' I'm a-goin' to put a chain an' padlock on it an' keep it, by gum, till their fathers come here an' settle with me fur the loss of my sheets. . . . If you be intendin' to stay here all night, mister, this is your room. Better raise the windy an' let some fresh air in. Gits awful hot up here in the afternoon. Wal, I've got to 'phone to my brother that the little imps has escaped. Drat the luck! My best sheets, too!"

Listening to the grumbler thump down the stairs, I could not doubt, after what he had said, that he had taken my pants with him. Certainly he had our money. The Harmony Hustler remained in the room. We could hear him trying to raise the window. After a lot of grunting and thumping he finally succeeded.

I was braced up in the thought that we still had a chance to escape, this in the event that Peg's rope wasn't taken away. As soon as it got dusk we could slide down the rope to freedom. Of

course, I would be pantless in my flight, and our show money would, of necessity, be left behind. But I told myself, in looking ahead, that the double loss of my pants and the show money wasn't necessarily a thing to worry about. Getting safely out of our prison was the big thought.

The Harmony Hustler moved here and there in the room, arranging the chairs to his satisfaction and fussing with the bed clothing. We couldn't see what he was doing, but I had the idea that he was turning the top covers back, as Mother does with my bed at home to make it easy for me to get into.

Below us, the lock tender was getting supper. We could smell frying ham. There was a rumbling as of a cranked coffee grinder. After a few minutes the pleasing aroma of boiling coffee was added to the appetizing ham smell. In the further course of the supper preparations there was a thump! thump! that told us that potatoes were being mashed in the kettle. I had heard the same sound in our kitchen any number of times and instantly recognized it.

Mashed potatoes and ham gravy! My mouth watered in the thought of it.

"Hey, Windfeller!"

"Yes, sir," the Harmony Hustler promptly called back.

"Be you wantin' canned-cherry sauce fur supper, or mincemeat pie?"

"I—aw—am very partial to pie, sir."

Scoop was holding his stomach.

"Oh! . . ." he groaned in my ear. "Can you smell the ham, Jerry?"

"Don't talk about it," I whispered back, in added misery.

"And mincemeat pie!"

"Shut up."

"If I don't get something to eat pretty soon," he groaned, "I'm done for."

We could now talk above a whisper for we had the bedroom to ourselves. We even put our heads out of our stuffy hiding place to get a breath of cooler air.

"Jerry, the rope's gone!"

I let out my neck and took a squint at the window.

"The piano fellow must have taken it downstairs," Scoop added, groaning in despair.

I told myself that I wouldn't give up.

"We can make another rope," I hung on doggedly.

"I'm not so sure about that. For if we give the least sound of our presence up here we're done for."

There was truth in that, all right. And depression descended upon me in spite of all that I could do to ward it off.

Night came. But if I had had any remaining small hope of being able to make another bed-sheet rope, to escape through the window after the manner of Red and Peg, I was doomed to disappointment. For the lock tender and his over-night guest never left the room below us. As a result we had to lay motionless under the bed. For a single suspicious creak of the floor could very easily have led to our undoing.

Our former jailer—I had quit regarding him as our jailer in fact, now that he had no knowledge of our presence in the house—had tried earlier in the day to get a telephone connection with his brother in Ashton. Failing, he had left word for the other to call back. So about eight o'clock the telephone bell rang. There was considerable excited conversation between the two brothers, chiefly to the point that we had escaped.

"Their boat's still here," the deputy concluded, "an' I've got the pants belongin' to one of 'em. If they come back to-night to try an' git away

with their boat, I'll fix 'em, by gum! They can't git away without me hearin' 'em. The little scallawags!"

The attic room was cooler now. But I doubt if our misery was made any the lighter by the lessened heat. For we still had our empty stomachs and parched mouths to contend with.

It was our plan now to wait until the household was asleep and then tiptoe down the stairs to freedom. We would make some noise in our descent of the stairs, that was unavoidable, but it was our hope that whatever slight sounds we made would pass undetected in the others' slumber.

In our nervous impatience to make our escape, it seemed to us that the lock tender and his guest never would go to bed. Our former jailer, playing the part of the host, brought out a checker board at the conclusion of his telephone conversation, and until upwards of ten-thirty the two men bent to their game, winning turn about.

Finally, though, to our tremendous relief, the lower doors were locked for the night and the Harmony Hustler mounted the stairs with a hand lamp. Upon his entrance into the bedroom he made a pretense of going to bed by dropping his removed shoes on the floor, after which, in con-

tinuation of his trick, he moved here and there in the room in his stocking feet. The trick completed, he quickly dressed his feet and blew out the light.

Boy, I was scared! It was bad enough to be in the room with him when we could see him; it was a thousand times worse to be shut up with him in the dark.

Suppose he put a snaky hand under the bed and touched me! I shivered in the thought of it.

"Jerry!" Scoop breathed in my ear.

I jumped in my nervousness.

"Did he touch you?" I gurgled.

"Touch me? Of course not. Can't you see him? He's watching the lock tender through the stovepipe hole."

I changed my position ever so slightly, careful to make no sound. And sure enough, as Scoop had said, the room's other occupant was on his hands and knees over the hole in the floor. The light from below shone on his tense face. A crouching killer! I could think of nothing else in the expression of his face and the suggestive posture of his body.

"Maybe he's going to kill the old man," I shivered, recalling stories I had read.

"Why should he do that?"

"Why should he hug the piano leg?" I countered.

"You think he wants the piano leg bad enough to commit murder to get it?"

"Look at his face," I returned. "If he isn't a killer, I never hope to see one."

"Um . . ." reflected Scoop. "I'm curious about that piano leg, Jerry. Maybe it's made of gold and painted to look like wood."

"Don't talk so loud," I shivered. "He'll hear you."

"I'd like to know what his scheme is."

"Sh-h-h-h!"

"What are we going to do if he starts downstairs with a knife? We can't let him murder the old man in his bed."

"We can yell."

"You poor fish!"

"If I was to yell the way I want to yell," I shivered, "I'd scare him dead in his tracks."

There was a moment's silence.

"I wonder where Red and Peg are."

"Probably in Steam Corners eating licorice . . . if Red has any money."

"I don't believe they're in Steam Corners. I'd sooner think they're hiding at the canal bank, waiting for us."

This remark brought to my mind the white-haired man. We had thought that *he* was waiting near by with the recovered bonds. But that, I now concluded, couldn't very well be the case. The warty-nosed man wouldn't have put up here for the night if his accomplice was waiting for him outside.

Below us the lock tender was pottering from room to room, talking to the black and white cat and making certain that the doors had all been locked. Finally he went into his bedroom. He wasn't going to undress, he told the cat, for he was of the belief that "them blasted b'ys," as he called us, would be back after the boat.

Having got into bed, he happened to remember that he hadn't wound the clock, so up he got again, pottering into the sitting room. The clock properly wound, he returned to his bed, only to remember, after a brief interval, that he had neglected to put a rug over the furnace register, to prevent the cat from doing any thimble dropping in the course of the night.

Finally a deep silence settled throughout the house. Ten-twenty-thirty minutes passed. There was not the slightest sound from the watcher at the stovepipe hole, though, of course, in the now darkened house, the man was using his ears and

not his eyes. He was listening, I knew, for possible sounds from the lower bedroom that would tell him that the bed's occupant had finally dropped asleep.

I was sort of nodding myself. But the pressure of Scoop's hand on my arm put me wide awake again.

"Come on, Jerry. Now's our chance."

My mind held a horrified picture of the crouching killer at the stovepipe hole.

"You're crazy," I gasped, in a panic of fear in the thought of leaving our hiding place.

"It's now or never. He's likely to wake up any moment."

"Is he asleep?" I breathed, in surprise.

"Sure thing. I can tell by his deep breathing. . . . Come on."

Well, I don't mind telling you that my heart was in my throat, sort of, as we crawled like snails from under the bed and tiptoed across the room to the door. The moonlight guided our steps. It revealed, too, the sleeping form of the killer. His back was against the wall and he sort of leaned to one side against a chair. It wouldn't take much to awaken him, for we realized that he had dropped to sleep by accident. As Scoop had said, there was need for quick work on our part.

The bedroom door creaked ever so slightly as we opened it. And at the sound my heart stopped pumping until I had made sure that the sleeper hadn't been disturbed. I felt safer when we were in the hall. If necessary we could make a run for it now.

In the moonlit lower room we had to pass the open door of the lock tender's chamber. He would surely see us if he was awake. However, from his deep, even breathing we concluded that *he* was asleep, too.

We got to the door and slowly turned the key in the lock. I gave a glad sigh when the door swung open. There was nothing between us and positive freedom now.

Scoop paused.

"Jerry," he whispered hoarsely, "I've got to have a drink. My mouth's on fire."

I went with him to the kitchen, for, as I have said, I, too, was suffering from burning thirst. And did water ever taste as good to me as it did then! Oh, boy! There was a pan of red apples on the kitchen table. We filled our pockets—that is, Scoop filled *his* pockets. You must remember that *I* had no pockets to fill except a small shirt pocket.

While we were in the kitchen Scoop got his

eyes on the lock tender's long white nightshirt. It lay on a kitchen chair, where its owner had probably dropped it, after having arrived at the determination to sleep in his clothes.

" 'A fair exchange is no robbery,' " the leader quoted, handing me the nightshirt. "Take it along, Jerry," he grinned. "You may need it. And later you can trade even-up with the old gent for your pants."

I was crazy to get out of the house; and rather than argue with the other about the nightshirt I rolled it up and put it under my arm. But I had no intention of using it. I'd look sweet, I told myself, parading around the landscape in old thing-a-ma-bob's nightshirt. Nothin' doin'!

Scoop was feeling more like himself now that he had gotten on the outside of a dipperful of water. And instead of going cautiously through the sitting room he strutted along in his most daring way, acting as though he owned the whole house and didn't care a rap for anybody or anything.

"Um . . ." he mumbled, stopping at the piano.

"Come on," I breathed, tugging anxiously at his arm.

"Just a minute." He got down on his knees

and squinted at the marked piano leg, thumping it with his knuckles in the way the killer had done. "I wish I had a light. Skip into the kitchen, Jerry, and get some matches."

"Not on your life. Come on."

He had hold of the leg with his hands.

"I can turn it!"

A foot scraped on the floor directly over our heads.

"It'll be your last 'turn,' " I shivered, conscious of a pair of burning eyes in the stovepipe hole, "if you don't hurry and get out of here."

"I've got it. Boy! It weighs a ton."

Whang! *Bang!!* CRASH!!! *BING!*

"It's the cat!" screeched Scoop, leaping to his feet. "Beat it, Jerry. Here comes old blunderbuss."

We went out of the house like a streak, my daring companion in the lead with the piano leg under his arm and me hot on his flying heels. Behind us we could hear the killer bounding down the stairs. The lock tender, in his bedroom, was roaring at the top of his voice.

Did you ever read the story about Jack, the boy who climbed the beanstalk? If you have you will remember the part where the hero was escaping from the giant's castle with the singing harp.

The harp, not wanting to be stolen, had awakened the giant by crying: "Master! Master!"

Well, I had a skidding thought of Jack's flight with the harp as we made off with the lock tender's piano leg. For back in the house the piano was yelling for its master as loudly as the black and white cat could make it.

We were now out of sight of the house. And realizing that the moonlight would show us up if we tried to escape down the tow path, we wisely dove into the heavy underbrush. Panting, our hearts pounding in the excitement of our escape, we lay on the ground, sort of tuning in on the shouting voices of our pursuers.

In a moment or two the running lock tender came into sight. He had his shotgun. Dad told me afterwards that I needn't have been in fear of the gun—he said that the man wouldn't have dared to have used it on us. But I'm not so sure about that. A man as crazy as the lock tender was is liable, in his excitement, to do anything.

The evil-faced killer came into sight, panting and sort of clawing the air with his working hands.

"It's them pesky b'ys," our former jailer roared, having paused near our hiding place.

"How they got in the house, though, is more 'an *I* know."

"We've got to capture them, sir," the other panted hoarsely.

"Wal, you blamed idiot, I'm tryin' to capture 'em, hain't I?"

"They've stolen your piano leg, sir."

"What?"

"A leg of your piano is missing, sir."

The lock tender set his gun down and gave a coarse, jerky laugh.

"Wal, by gum! A pianny leg! Whoever heerd tell of anybody stealin' a pianny leg?"

They went on down the tow path in the hope of catching possible sight of us. After ten or fifteen minutes they hurried back. Now was our chance to get away. And scrambling to our feet we started down the tow path in the direction of the wide waters lickety-cut.

When we were a good mile from the lock we stopped to rest and sort of plan things. First of all we had the job of finding our pals. Our conclusion was that they had not gone to Steam Corners. The island was the place for us to head for, though how we were going to cross the water without a boat was more than we knew in the moment.

"We might use the piano leg for a raft," I joked, holding up the big leg and sort of squinting at it curious-like in the moonlight.

"Gosh!" laughed Scoop. "I had almost forgotten that it was here."

I made an amazing discovery.

"Lookit!" I yipped, holding up a roll of greenbacks that I had found in the leg's hollow stomach.

Yes, sir, it was *real* money. Not one-dollar and two-dollar bills, either, but tens and twenties —dozens and dozens of them, rolled tightly together.

CHAPTER XVII

BACK TO THE ISLAND

In unscrewing the marked leg of the lock tender's old fashioned piano, it had not been the intention of my curious companion to run off with it. For he had no right to do that. It was stealing, sort of. Certainly, as he admitted to me later on, he wouldn't have taken the leg out of its owner's house if he had known that it was full of money.

He had been led to the piano leg out of curiosity. Having seen the Harmony Hustler turn it, *he* had wanted to turn it. That, he had concluded, was the way into its secret.

But whatever scattered ideas he and I may have had bearing on the leg's probable secret, I can truthfully state that our discovery of the money was a smashing surprise. We hadn't dreamed of a thing like this. And had we made the discovery of the roll of greenbacks while in the house the chances are that we would have dropped the leg in a hurry. For it would have

been our natural thought that here was the piano owner's hoardings. The piano leg was his savings bank.

But it was a mighty lucky thing, as we found out later on, that we did sort of run off unintentionally with the piano leg, to learn, when our excitement in our escape had somewhat subsided, of its surprising contents. For in the act we saved the money from falling into the killer's thieving hands. More than that we probably saved a man's life.

We knew now that the money didn't belong to the lock tender. For he had shown no excitement when he had been told, within our hearing, that a leg of his piano had been stolen. Had he known that the missing leg was full of money—*his* money—he would have been crazily excited. We had no doubt on that point.

The killer, on the other hand, *did* know about the money. And in short thought it could have been concluded therefrom that the hidden greenbacks were his. But in our deep distrust of him we didn't accept the first thought that came into our heads. It was true that he had shown a knowledge of the hidden money, but he had shown, too, in his investigation of the piano's legs, a definite lack of knowledge of the money's

exact hiding place. This was conclusive in our minds that he hadn't hidden the money himself. Therefore, we argued, the money wasn't his.

We had not the slightest intention of returning the greenbacks to the lock tender. Why should we when they didn't belong to him? If he once got his hands on the fortune he would *say* that the money was his. We had little more belief in his honesty than we had in the killer's, and certainly, insofar as we were able to prevent it, the latter was to be given no chance at the money.

The thing to do, we decided, was to keep the money and turn it over to the law, together with a detailed explanation of how it had come into our possession. The law, in fairness to all concerned, would see that the money passed into the hands of its rightful owner. I might add here, in all frankness, that we were not without hope that some share of the money would be awarded to us. We felt that we were earning a right to a part of it.

We counted the greenbacks by the light of the moon, thus learning that the roll consisted of thirty twenty-dollar bills and forty ten-dollar bills —an even thousand dollars!

Of the opinion that the money was no longer

safe in the hollow of the piano leg, Scoop stuffed three hundred dollars into each of his two side pockets, dividing the balance into two rolls of two hundred dollars each, which he put away in his two hip pockets. He told me in the conclusion of the money's distribution that he felt like a walking safe. And I could imagine that he did, all right. For it isn't every day in a fellow's life that he has a chance to pocket a thousand dollars.

In resting we had disposed of our apples, sorry, in our hollow hunger, that we hadn't more of them to eat. The food gave us new pep. Starting out again in our passage to the big wide waters, we took turns carrying the heavy piano leg, which was to back us up in our story when we came before the law.

The big sum of money in our possession was an anxiety to us, and, as can be imagined, we kept a constant eye ahead of us and behind us. Once in looking back I thought I detected a man of the killer's size in the shadow of the trees. We hid in the underbrush at the next turn in the tow path. But no one overtook us. So it was concluded that what I had mistaken for a man in my nervousness was probably a bush or a tall tree stump.

Where was the white-haired man? Were Red

and Peg on his trail? Had he recovered the bonds, as we had concluded, and was he now far away from the island? Or was he, for some reason or purpose unknown to us, still in hiding near by?

I could only speculate in my mind regarding the probable answers to these questions. Nor had I any answer to the riddle of why the two thieves had separated. We knew where one of the evil pair was. The thought of a possible sudden meeting with the other one in the moonlit tow path filled me with shivers.

Scoop got his eyes on me.

"What's the matter, Jerry? Are you cold?"

"Cold and scared both," I admitted, my teeth chattering.

He looked me over.

"I should think you would be cold in your underwear and shoes. Why don't you put on the nightshirt?"

"Aw! . . ."

"Go ahead. Shucks! What do you care how you look?" he urged, reading my thoughts.

None of us had been wearing stockings with our shoes. And I realized now that my bare legs were colder in the damp night air than I had imagined. So I acted on the other's advice and

got into the long white nightshirt. It was a big help to me, I found, in keeping my legs warm.

Coming to the big wide waters, we had a moonlight view of the island to our right. A thing that puzzled us was the occasional flicker of a campfire on the rise where the bonds had been buried. While we were discussing the campfire a rowboat came into sight around the head of the island. For all we knew to the contrary the boat's occupant was an officer bent on our capture. So the thing for us to do, we wisely concluded, was to get out of sight.

After an elapse of several minutes we detected the sound of oarlocks. We could hear, too, in the approach of the boat, the intermittent swish! swish! of the rower's blades as they bit into the water. It appeared that the boat was heading up the canal in the direction of the lock where we had been held prisoners. This strengthened our belief that the rower was probably the Ashton policeman, on his way to his brother's house.

"I'm hungry," a low voice complained.

"Huh!" came another and gruffer voice. "You're always hungry."

"I haven't had any supper."

"Nor have we. But you don't hear us growling about it."

"I wish I was home."

My companion put a quick hand on my arm.

"Recognize that yap, Jerry?"

"It's Red Meyers."

"Sure thing."

We guardedly put up our heads to get a better view of the boat's passengers. It was our chums, all right! The girl was in the boat, too. My heart gave a happy bound.

At our signal Peg brought the boat quickly to shore, as tickled to see us as we were to see him.

I was a bit backward about showing myself in front of the girl in my ridiculous gown. I didn't want her to think that I was foolish.

Scoop read my embarrassment in my actions.

"Miss Garber," he introduced in mock gravity, dragging me into sight, "allow me to present to you my charming friend, Miss Pansy Blossom."

Red forgot all about his hollow stomach in my confusion.

" 'Miss Pansy Blossom!' " he hooted. "Haw! haw! haw!"

Joining Scoop in the fun of the nonsensical introduction, the girl gave me her hand in a sort of stylish-like way, telling me the while that it was indeed a great pleasure for her to make the acquaintance of "Miss Pansy Blossom."

The joke was on me, all right. And I decided on the instant that the best way out of the embarrassing situation would be to pretend as much hilarity and fun in my crazy appearance as the others.

Well, in getting down to business, we told our chums the story of our spectacular flight from the lock tender's house with the piano leg. There was amazement in their eyes, and in the girl's eyes, at sight of our money.

Then Peg told us of his and Red's movements since their escape down the rope. They had waited for us in the underbrush. When we had failed to appear, and they had been made to realize from the vanished rope that we had been shut off in our intended escape, they had held guarded counsel, thus deciding to go to the island to learn if the girl were still there. It had been their further plan to return to the lock at dusk to help us to possible freedom.

Arriving at the wide waters, the big one had fashioned a sort of bathing suit of his underwear and shirt and had swum to the island, where he had promptly come in contact with the girl, informing her in the meeting of the attack upon her grandfather and of her position in the tangle. The white-haired uncle, the swimmer had learned

in turn, had not been to the island, nor had the warty-nosed man been there.

"I told Lizzie," Peg concluded, "that the thing for us to do, now that her grandfather was in the hospital, was to dig up the bonds and get them into a bank as soon as we could. Then her uncle wouldn't be able to steal them. She agreed to the suggestion. And if we had dug up the bonds *then,* everything would have been lovely. Instead, I borrowed her boat, which was hidden in the shore willows at the head of the island, and rowed to the tow path for Red.

"And now comes the sad part," freckle-nose put in, wagging his head.

There was an anxious look on Scoop's tired face.

"What happened?" he inquired in a somewhat dull voice, plainly prepared to hear the worst.

"In the time that we were away," Peg continued, "campers landed on the island from down the canal. The Stricker gang. Seven of them. We had a time getting back to our harbor unseen."

"The dickens!" Scoop cried, with troubled eyes. He looked at me. "That explains the campfire, Jerry."

"Returning to the island," Peg went on, "we

lay in hiding, in the hope that the enemy would leave the place long enough for us to climb the knoll and dig up the bonds. No such good luck, though. Not only were the others in complete possession of the island, but they actually pitched their tents on the knoll over the buried bonds."

The leader was staring open-mouthed.

"What's that?" he cried.

"I say," Peg repeated patiently, "that Bid Stricker's tent is set up directly over the spot where we buried the bonds. Of course he doesn't know that the bonds are there. And it is well for our purpose that he doesn't."

It was news to Scoop and me that a reward of two hundred dollars had been offered by the Ashton police department for information that would lead to the granddaughter's arrest and to the subsequent recovery of the stolen bonds. Peg and the others had learned of the reward by listening, unseen, to the campers' conversation.

"It's still the crazy belief of the police," the big one went on, "that Lizzie tried to murder her grandfather. And it was largely on her account that Red and I held back on the Strickers. For we didn't want to run the chance of defeat and have them drag her off to jail in order to claim the reward."

Scoop got the granddaughter's eyes.

"You needn't worry," he said quickly, "about going to jail. For your story of your uncle's presence in the house at the time of the assault will clear you."

"That's what I told her," Peg waggled. "She's anxious, of course, to get back to town . . . she wants to be with her grandfather. And to that point I was hopeful that we all would be able to say good-by to the island before dusk. With the recovered bonds in our possesssion, it was planned that Red was to go to town with the girl in the boat while I headed for the lock to help you fellows. But, as I say, the Strickers were constantly in our way. And when it came eleven o'clock, and we were no nearer to getting the bonds than we had been at sundown, I told the others that we had best head for the lock. We owed you our help. And if we could free you, we would then have your help."

Red laughed.

"We found out something else by listening in on the Strickers' gab."

"Well?" Scoop encouraged.

"Remember the night they came to the boat, intending to smash up our show truck?"

"Sure thing. Jerry and Peg were on guard."

"They saw a ghost, all right."

"It was the sudden appearance of the ghost on the boat," Peg put in, "that scared them away."

Scoop laughed in a reflective way.

"Our 'friendly ghost'! I'd like to know who this spooky person is who has taken such a shine to us. Did you hear them say what the ghost looked like?"

"They described it as being tall and white. When it came over the side of the boat, out of the canal, sort of, they beat it, scared out of their wits."

Scoop got his eyes on me.

"If they get a look at you in that outfit, Jerry—I beg pardon," he bowed, grinning, "I mean Miss Pansy Blossom—they'll think they're seeing another ghost."

Matching his grin with one of my own I sort of posed in my fancy gown. It wasn't an embarrassment to me now, as it had been on the start.

Peg gave a gesture of impatience.

"Let's cut out the nonsense," he suggested, serious. "For we've got a man's size job on our hands to-night in getting the bonds. This is our last chance, fellows. For a dozen cops will be nosing around here to-morrow."

Scoop was looking at me steadily, his eyes sort of narrowed and probing. Laughing in the conclusion of his thoughts, he started for the boat.

"Come on, Miss Pansy Blossom," he beckoned to me. "This is your busy night."

"What do you mean?" I inquired quickly.

But I couldn't get him to expose his thoughts. All the way to the island he kept going, "Tra-la-lee-tra-la-lum!" in imitation of the piano tuner. And at intervals he would look at me and laugh.

I saw that he was up to some scheme bearing on the recovery of the buried bonds from under Bid Stricker's tent. I couldn't imagine what the scheme was. But plainly I was involved in it.

I was not without anxiety in the prospect of what lay ahead of me.

CHAPTER XVIII

WHAT THE TURTLE DID TO ME

PEG told us that the Strickers' camp was without a guard, but, even so, it was wise for us, we concluded, to approach the island in secrecy. For in a boys' camp it is not uncommon at night for some wakeful or hungry one to be abroad in search of fun or food. I've frequently done it myself. And I could tell of tricks that have been played on me when supposedly every member of the camp was asleep like myself. It would seem from listening ashore that all of the members of this camp were asleep. But, as I say, we took no chances.

It was now close to midnight. The moon, as we drew near to the silent island's east end, was almost directly over our heads. I was glad from the bottom of my heart that the moon was out. For its fat glistening face gave us a protecting wide range of vision in all directions.

What would the killer do, I wondered, now

that he had been foiled, sort of, in his intended evil scheme of stealing the piano leg's greenbacks? Would he, in fear of what we might have to tell about him, get quickly out of the country? Or would he try to run us down, in continued determination to get the money?

One thing in our favor, he didn't know in which direction we had made our escape, whether to the east, toward Steam Corners, or to the west. So he would have no certain knowledge of where to turn to put his hands on us. And to start searching for us in the canal's extended wilderness without a clew to our probable whereabouts would be like trying to find the needle that was lost in the haystack.

It was more probable, I told myself, that he would keep close to the lock tender's dock, in the thought that we would be likely to return to the lock to try and recover our show boat. If he held to that possible plan we were safer still. For we had not the slightest intention of trying to get possession of the scow. That, we had sensibly concluded, was a job for our fathers, particularly *my* father, the boat's owner. *Our* job, instead of scheming and fighting for the boat, was to get back to Tutter with the greenbacks and the bonds. Then the law, as represented by the lock tender

and his brother, could sort of settle with us through our parents.

At sight of the piano leg in the boat I fell to wondering to whom the greenbacks that we had found belonged. The lock tender had said in our hearing that he had bought the piano at a second-hand sale. As he seemed to know nothing about the hidden greenbacks, the money undoubtedly had been contained in the hollow leg when he had brought the piano home. This led to the logical conclusion that the money belonged to the piano's former owner. Yet it was puzzling to me to understand why a man, after having secreted a thousand dollars in bills in the leg of his piano, should turn around and sell the instrument for little or nothing. And it was equally puzzling to comprehend how the killer had come into his knowledge of the hidden money.

Suppose the law couldn't locate the piano's former owner? Would the money in that event be ours? Hot dog! I said to myself, thinking of the fun we could have with a thousand dollars.

Arriving at the island we placed the boat in charge of the girl, cautioning her not to leave it or to move it. Then we proceeded single file up the rocky slope to the knoll where the enemy was in camp. Coming to the entrance to the hermit's

cave, Scoop turned in, signaling to us to wait for him. In a moment or two he returned from the cave with a three-foot length of rope that I remembered seeing on the cave's sandy floor the preceding day.

"It's a good thing for my scheme," he laughed, starting to untwist the rope's strands, "that the Strickers believe in ghosts."

"What do you mean?" Peg inquired quickly, plainly puzzled to understand what the other was planning to do with the rope.

The leader gave a short laugh.

"What was the name of the hermit who used to live here?" he inquired, disregarding the question that the big one had put to him.

"Anton Hackman," I supplied, out of my knowledge of the island's history.

The rope was now untwisted into curly strands.

"Take off your cap, Jerry," the leader laughed.

"What for?" I wanted to know, in growing anxiety.

"Well, if you're going to be old Anton's ghost, you've got to have long scraggly hair. For whoever heard of a hermit who shaved himself or trimmed his hair?"

I backed off. For I saw into his scheme now. He was going to play ghost to scare the Strickers

out of their camp, so that we could have the knoll to ourselves in the recovery of the bonds.

"Nothin' doin'," I told him firmly.

Peg laughed as he grasped the leader's proposed scheme of starting me out in a ghostly career.

"Shucks! Go ahead, Jerry. You'll make a peachy ghost in your fancy nightshirt. It'll be fun, too."

" 'Fun'?" I repeated, giving him a stiff look. "I wouldn't call it 'fun' to have a bullet plugged into me."

"They haven't any guns."

"Bid Stricker's a good shot with a rock," I came back, looking out for myself. "And I'm not so small that he wouldn't be able to crack me one if he half tried."

"I never heard of anybody pitching rocks at a ghost," Peg argued.

"Of course not," Scoop put in quickly, in support of his scheme. "The proper thing for a fellow to do when he sees a ghost," he added, acting as though he knew it all, "is to take to his heels and skiddo. And that's exactly what the Strickers will do when they get sight of you, Jerry. Honest, kid, I don't want to envy you the fun you're going to have, but I'd think *I* was

pretty lucky, let me tell you, to have a ghost shirt like yours."

"To show you how unselfish I am," I offered quickly, "I'll trade you my nightshirt for your pants even-up."

But he shook his head.

"No, Jerry," he refused, in put-on seriousness. "I'm your loyal chum and I would be ashamed of myself to take advantage of you in a trade. Besides, I don't believe that the nightshirt would fit me. My legs aren't shaped like yours."

I was getting hot at him for trying to crowd me into taking the risky part.

"You don't *want* it to fit you," I flared up, holding him with my scowling eyes. "You want *me* to take *all* the risks. You're good, you are . . . to yourself!"

He straightway started to peel off his pants.

"Shucks!" I said, feeling foolish. "I didn't mean it. What do you want me to do?"

Peg patted me on the back.

"Good ol' Pansy Blossom!" he bragged.

I wasn't half as brave as he thought I was. But I had pride in wanting to appear brave. So I let the others fix me up. The rope strands that they tucked under my cap gave me the appearance of having hair to my shoulders. I was

WE PROCEEDED UP THE ROCKY SLOPE TO WHERE THE ENEMY WAS IN CAMP.

Jerry Todd and the Oak Island Treasure. *Page* 197

a pretty-looking picture, let me tell you, when they got through with me. I was then supplied with a crooked stick for a cane and instructed how to walk, sort of bent over like an old man. Having memorized the piece that I was to recite, we continued our ascent of the hill.

"You better say good-by to your little Pansy Blossom," I told the others, when we came to the tents of the sleeping enemy. "For I have the feeling that you won't see Pansy whole again."

"Rats!" laughed Scoop. "You aren't in any danger, Jerry."

"Something's the matter with my knees," I shivered. "They wiggle."

"Toe in and they'll be all right."

"Maybe," I suggested, "you fellows better come along with me and sort of prop me up on each side."

"Forget it!"

"I want to," I returned quickly, "but you won't let me."

"Shucks! Think of the satisfaction of being able to tell the Strickers later on that *you* were the 'ghost' that put them scooting."

"They may 'scoot' at me," I worried, "and knock my block off."

Well, it had to be done. So, with a sort of re-

signed sigh, I got ready to do it. Arranging my rope hair so that it hung down in my eyes I gripped my crooked cane and went across the open spot where the campfire had been built to the big tent, which, as Peg had said, was set up directly over the place where we had buried the bonds. Squinting inside, I saw Bid and another member of the gang snoozing to beat the cars. His mouth open, the leader was going: "Hee-e-e-haw-w-w! Hee-e-e-haw-w-w!" At sight of him I stiffened. What he had coming to him! Oh, mamma! The thought of it sort of perked me up and stiffened my grit. I had had to endure many mean tricks at his hands. But now I was to get even. I was glad.

In line with Scoop's instructions I gave a sort of graveyard groan, standing in full view within the moonlit tent. Bid moved in his sleep. Another blood-curdling groan brought his eyes wide open. He gave a gasp at sight of my white nightshirt and rope hair. From the sound he made I could imagine that his heart had just gone kerplunk! into a puddle in the pit of his stomach. Raising himself on his hands he blinked at me, as though he couldn't make himself believe that he really was awake.

"I . . . am . . . the . . . ghost . . . of

Anton . . . Hackman . . . the . . . hermit," I recited slowly, letting my voice come out of my shoes, sort of. "I . . . was . . . murdered . . . on . . . this . . . spot," I went on. "I . . . warn . . . you . . . away." Here I made a slashing motion with my pocketknife. "I . . . cut . . . initials . . . on boys' . . . gizzards," I concluded.

Well, I could tell from Bid's face that there was no longer any doubt in his mind that he was wide awake. He was seeing, so he thought, the sure-enough ghost of the island's dead hermit, whose story, of course, he had heard.

And was he scared? I only wish you could have seen him! Oh, boy! His eyes, glassy with horror, stuck out of his white face like halved onions.

The tent's other occupant was now awake and sitting up.

"What the dickens? . . ." Hib Milden stared, blinking at me. Then, in better control of his senses, he let out a ringing screech. "It's a ghost! It's a ghost!"

Bid didn't say anything. He couldn't. He was scared speechless. But the use of his arms and legs had not deserted him, as was shown when I started at him with my pocketknife.

Backing off on all fours, like a crab, he went out of the tent under its canvas wall and down the hill like a shot, the other kid hot on his flying heels.

Their screaming voices awakened the others. A pair of bare legs was disgorged from one pup tent; a tousled head came out of another. To an audience of five pairs of bulging eyes I did some more reciting and knife flourishing. And it wasn't many seconds, let me tell you, before Bid's trusty followers had joined their gallant leader at the foot of the hill.

At the flight of the Strickers my chums came quickly into sight. Tearing down the big tent, to get a clearer view of the ground, they quickly located the spot where the treasure had been buried and set to work, using a spade that they had picked up near the campfire.

Boy, I never saw faster digging in all my life! And as the others worked in the recovery of the treasure I did a few more moonlight ghost stunts for the benefit of the scared ones at the foot of the hill. But they were fast getting over their scare. I could see that.

Pretty soon the spade struck the brass box. In another minute the treasure was lifted out of the ground. The Strickers were now coming up the

hill on the run. But their fast approach didn't excite us. For in the time that it would take them to reach the top of the hill we would be half-way to the boat.

The leader had the brass box locked tightly in his arms.

"Beat it, everybody!" he panted, starting down the hill on the gallop, Red and Peg hard after him.

Of no desire to make the journey from the island into Tutter in a borrowed nightshirt, I said to myself that here was my chance to get a pair of pants. Darting to one of the pup tents I grabbed the first pair of pants that came to my hands. I could hear the Strickers near by. So I didn't try to run back to the path, but jumped into the nearest clump of hazel brush. It was shadowy here. I couldn't see where I was putting my feet.

Snap!

I gave a terrified shriek as the awful thing, whatever it was, set its teeth into the toe of my left shoe. The island contained some monstrous snakes. Five—six feet long. Black fellows with hungry eyes. And on the moment all I could think of was that I had stepped into a snake's

nest. I expected to have a wriggling body coil itself around my captured leg. *Oh!* . . . I can't begin to describe my terror and horror.

But it wasn't a snake. Instead, it was a huge snapping turtle—the same turtle, we were told later, that Peg and Red had captured in their trip around the island. The Strickers had picked up the big turtle in landing on the island and had tied it, by one hind foot, to a tree near their camp.

Say, at sight of that turtle I felt like a dumbbell right. With seventeen billion places on the island to put my foot down, I had picked out one of the very few places where danger lurked. I was good, all right!

I gave my foot a sharp wrench. But the old snapper had a death grip on the toe of my shoe. I could imagine from his dogged conduct that the Strickers had been tantalizing him with sticks, getting him in exactly the right frame of mind to want to chew the piston out of a locomotive. What a piece of good luck, he probably was purring to himself, that a nice juicy foot had finally come within snapping distance of his watering jaws. Gr-r-r-r! Just to show me how tickled he was in the turn of his luck he tightened down with his teeth. I gave another shriek. My toes were being crushed.

The Strickers had by this time arrived in a fighting mood at the top of the hill. I could hear them raving about the flattened tent. And realizing what would happen to me if they got their hands on me, I whipped out my pocketknife, slashing the rope that held the turtle to the tree. Then the two of us, the snapper and me, rolled over and over down the hill.

"It's Jerry Todd!" I heard Bid Stricker screech. "After him, fellows," was the leader's furious command.

CHAPTER XIX

IN THE CAVE

AFTERWARDS, when our adventure had come to an end and I was home again, with my stomach crammed full of Mother's grand cooking and my left foot done up in arnica bandages, Dad asked me if I was the one who had thought up the ghost trick. I could tell from the tone of his voice that the trick didn't stack up very high in his estimation, so I hastened to tell him the truth about the matter.

"I rather thought it was Scoop's work," he grunted. "Why do you always let that crazy kid do your thinking for you?" he followed up. "Why don't you do your own thinking?"

"He has more ideas than any of the rest of us," I explained lamely.

"Is this a sample of one of his most brilliant ideas?"

I didn't say anything.

"If *I* had been your leader," Dad proceeded, "I wouldn't have aroused the whole camp with a

crazy ghost trick. Instead, I would have quietly concentrated on the two kids in the big tent."

I still didn't say anything.

"The four of you," the speaker went on, "could have handled Bid and the other kid without a particle of trouble, keeping them from sounding an outcry. But I don't suppose you ever thought of such a commonplace scheme as that."

"No," I admitted.

In looking back I can truthfully agree with Dad to the point that our ghost trick was somewhat of a crazy mess. And the wonder to me is that it worked as well as it did. I don't believe that any boy could fool *me* with a shallow trick like that. Still, a fellow should be slow to brag on himself ahead of time. For, in all truth, as I have found out from experience, it is hard to always foretell what one is liable to do if caught unprepared. And if I had been in Bid Stricker's boots, so to speak, it isn't improbable that I would have lost my head as completely as he did.

Anyway, to sum up, I have no regrets that we took the more exciting course of recovering the buried treasure as considered against the safer course. For we had fun . . . up to the point where the snapper got a whack at me. What we did that night makes better reading, I think, than

what Dad would have done. So, as I say, with the interests of my story in mind, I am glad that Scoop, and not the elder, was the leader.

Well, as I left off in the preceding chapter, the snapper and I did a sort of spirited loop-the-loop down the sandy side of the hill. And having successfully skinned four noses and eleven elbows and seven ears, all of which belonged to me, we landed in a sort of tangle at the foot of the incline.

In the rough-and-tumble descent the snapper had cheerfully gagged up my leg, probably of the opinion that life in my company was much too exciting for one of its staid temperament. And as I sort of untwisted my arms and legs from around my neck, I was treated to a sight of my late toe crusher stiffly retreating to the water on long brisk legs. Its whole expression was one of outraged indignation. And I doubt not that to this day it tells its gaping grandchildren and great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren a pitiful story of how a sort of demonic combination of legs and arms and white nightshirt and rope hair tried to fiendishly murder it by stomping on it and rolling on it and stuffing its eyes full of scenery and sand burs. And in the times when I am abroad in the canal

it isn't improbable, in fancy, that I am the unknown target of many pairs of venomous young-snapper eyes, whose hard-shelled clannish owners haven't forgiven me for what I did in cold blood to "poor old grandpop."

But I should worry about "poor old grandpop." For he certainly did a plenty to me.

As can be imagined I had made a much livelier and hence quicker descent of the hill than Bid Stricker and his galloping followers. And having been able to keep my senses in a bundle in the time that I was skidding through the sand burs, first on one ear and then on the other, I wasn't more than a handful of seconds getting to my feet when I arrived, so to speak, at the end of the car line.

Somewhere on the whirling hillside, between me and the spinning moon, the enemy was shouting and pounding their way through the hazel brush. In view of their very determined and businesslike actions, it plainly was important to my safety, I decided, to do some brisk leg stretching in the direction of the rowboat.

But where was the blamed boat? I had lost all sense of directions. The moon, now sensibly quieted down, was the only thing within range of my eyes that was properly in place. Certainly

the hill that I had just separated company with had turned itself around. I had accompanied the snapper down the east slope, yet here I was at the foot of the west slope—or was it the north slope? No matter, I wasn't to be fooled. The hill had turned around and I knew it.

However, vague as I was on the points of the compass, I started off undaunted, following my nose. But unfortunately I wasn't quite nimble enough to escape to cover ahead of the enemy's lively eyes. They let out a chesty whoop at sight of me. And down the hill they galloped faster than ever . . . seven lumbering, baying, brutish hounds, I bitterly thought to myself, chasing one poor gentle fox.

I was in a path now. But it wasn't, I quickly concluded, the path leading to the boat. It couldn't be, I told myself steadily. For it was on the wrong side of the hill to be the right path. Nevertheless, thinks I, it is worth penetrating. So on I went with one good foot and what was left of the other one.

Hot dog! A miracle had happened. I *was* in the right path, after all. For up ahead of me was the entrance to the hermit's cave.

The path at this point led along a sort of ledge, with a white sandstone wall on the right,

into which the mouth of the cave was set. To the left was a drop of possibly twenty feet into a ravine.

Coming to the narrow ledge I slowed down. For I had no wish to lose my footing and end up in the rocky pit of the ravine. A moment later I wished with all my heart that I *had* gone into the ravine. For what do you know if I didn't run smack into the killer!

Yes, sir, the warty-nosed piano tuner was in the cave, and when I skidded into the picture, so to speak, he stepped out and nabbed me. I don't mean that he was rough about it. To the contrary, he was crammed full of oily politeness. But I wasn't fooled by his smooth manners. For I could see behind his shell of politeness into a twisted mind and a blood-hungry heart.

Boy, was I ever scared! I had frightened Bid Stricker with silly talk about cutting initials on his gizzard. Now I thought to myself, in cold shivers, how about my own gizzard?

"And so," the killer said softly, smiling into my bulging eyes with a sort of purring-cat expression on his wicked face, "we meet again."

I didn't say anything, for, in my scare, I had forgotten how to unhook my tongue.

"I trust," he added, still purring and feeling

of me with his mean eyes, "that you remember me."

I nodded jerkily, swallowing to keep my heart down. In trying to back up, to get as far away from the other as I could, I pressed so hard against the cave's white wall that it is a wonder that the stone didn't crack.

The object of my horrified gaze sort of wound himself up for one of his long-winded speeches.

"In our other brief meeting, as I recall, I was in somewhat of—aw—frivolous talkative mood. That undoubtedly did not escape your attention. And for fear that you might harbor the erroneous impression, along with certain others with whom I have come in contact, that I am a man of idle, silly words and extravagant manners, and nothing else, I hasten, my young friend, in the interests of your continued welfare, to draw an illustrative parallel between myself and that universally treasured pet, the seemingly gentle house cat. The point is," and his voice was steely now, "that even as the purring cat has hidden claws, so also may I!"

I saw what he meant. He was talking business and he wanted me to know it.

Letting his hidden threat have time to sink in, he added brusquely:

"You know what I want. If you've got it, come across with it," and he held out his hand, rubbing his thumb and finger tips.

As I say, I was scared speechless.

"Well?" he followed up sharply, with a gesture of impatience.

I shook my head.

"You haven't got the money?"

I gave my head another shake, shivering in the horror of his snaky touch as he quickly felt me over to make sure that I was telling him the truth.

"It embarrasses me," he sort of hummed in his work, "to appear, in my actions, to doubt your veracity. That, I realize, as an ardent student of the science of psychology, is bad, very bad. However, business is business. . . . Who has the money?—one of your pals?"

I nodded.

"If I were of a prying nature," he went on, "I might feel the impulse to press you for an explanation of how you arrived at your knowledge of the hidden money. However, that is neither here nor there. . . . I notice that you are without pants and hence without pockets."

I nodded again.

"Is this the lock tender's nightshirt?"

I answered with another nod.

"Great indeed will be his perturbation when he learns that he has lost a nightshirt as well as a piano leg and three pairs of choice bed sheets! A worthy old gentleman, though a trifle obtuse. Still, he played a most excellent game of checkers."

At this point the Strickers tumbled into the cave, hot and panting, amazed to find me in the company of a strange man.

But Bid made short work of recovering his nervy gab.

"Hey!" he panted, jabbing his finger at me. "We want him."

The killer, having eagerly searched the newcomers' faces in the hope of finding my chums, smiled dryly.

"Who," he inquired slowly, holding Bid's eyes, "are 'we'?"

The leader waggled and gestured.

"He tore our tent down, mister. You can come up the hill and see for yourself if you don't believe me. We're camping up there. And he came up on us when we were asleep."

Jimmy Stricker got his shrill voice oiled up.

"He made us think he was a ghost."

This gave the killer an explanation of my not

ordinary appearance. And his peculiar smile deepened as he looked me over.

"Have you," he inquired gravely, "been picking on these poor defenseless boys?"

I nodded.

"He said he was Anton Hackman's ghost," Jimmy put in.

"And who, may I ask, is Anton Hackman?"

The screechy one let out his neck in surprise.

"Didn't you ever hear of *him?*" he countered shrilly. "You know what a hermit is, don't you? Well, he was a hermit and he lived right here in this cave. Yes, sir, mister, he did. That was years and years ago. Some people tell that he was murdered. Others say he just died of old age and was ate up by the wolves. Anyway, he disappeared."

The killer, in continuation of his cat-like smile, plucked one of my few remaining rope strands.

"A not bad imitation of hair, at that," he mused.

Bid Stricker flushed.

"Huh!" he grunted, humiliated in the thought of how cleverly I had fooled him.

"The actions of you boys," the killer spoke up after a moment, "would suggest to me that you are not the warmest of friends."

"I should hope not," Bid spit out, glaring at me. "We hate him. . . . Let us have him, mister," he begged eagerly.

But the killer raised a hand in my protection.

"Do you happen to know," he inquired of the gang's leader, "if this boy's companions are on the island?"

"Sure thing," Bid blurted out. "We saw 'em."

The killer's eyes snapped at this information. Gone was the purring smile now. I shivered in the sudden change in the man. For I read his evil mind. He was going to get Scoop.

"I have important business elsewhere on the island," he told Bid quickly, "and I am going to ask you to stay here and guard this boy until I return. However, much as you would like to do so, I caution you *not* to lay hands on him to mistreat him. For he is *my* prisoner. Understand? . . . I'll be back in a few minutes."

Bid was on fire with curiosity.

"Who is he, Jerry?" he quizzed, when the killer had passed quickly from the cave.

I didn't say anything.

"We can *make* you talk," Jimmy Stricker put in.

"Seven to one," I sneered.

The leader's eyes hadn't left my face.

"Who is he?" he pressed steadily.

"The King of Ireland."

"I'll 'king' you," he darkened.

"Yesterday," I said, "he was the Sultan of San Francisco."

"I'd like to punch your head," raved Bid.

Jimmy was dancing.

"Go ahead; go ahead," he urged, pushing the leader's arm.

But Bid, with an uneasy look at the cave's entrance, shook his head.

"You heard what the man said."

Jimmy is full of mean tricks.

"Anyway," he hung on, wanting to work his spite on me, "we've got a right, as his guards, to tie him up," and he came at me with a piece of rope that Scoop had left in the cave.

I tried to fight him off. I would have succeeded, too, if the others hadn't pitched in and helped him. I was hot, let me tell you. I had no chance against seven. And, as I lay on the cave floor, bound hand and foot, I told myself that they'd get their pay for this.

Then, in the turn of my thoughts, I wondered what was happening outside of the cave. Had my chums been backed into a trap by the killer? Was the money forever lost to us? And had the

triumphant thief also made off with the bonds?

I was miserable in the helplessness of my position and in our seeming defeat.

As the minutes dragged along and the killer didn't return, the Strickers became impatient. One of them went outside to look around.

"Hey, Jimmy."

"Well?"

"Come out here a minute."

Bid's cousin went outside to learn what the other wanted of him. There was an elapse of a minute or two. Then:

"Hib! Come here."

Hib Milden went out. And pretty soon *he* called to a fourth one and the fourth one to a fifth. I began to wonder, in mounting uneasiness, what was happening out there where they were.

Leaving the seventh member of the gang on guard over me, Bid himself took a look outside to learn what had attracted his companions from the cave, one after another. And pretty soon *he* called out:

"Hey, Tom! Come here."

I was now left all alone in the cave. Two—three minutes passed as I struggled with my bonds. Then a chuckle penetrated my anxious ears. It was Peg!

"Hi, Jerry," old hefty grinned, coming into the cave. Whipping out his pocketknife he cut my bonds.

I got quickly to my feet.

"The Strickers are outside!" I cried in warning, expecting any moment to have the enemy rush into the cave.

Peg gave an easy laugh.

"Sure thing the Strickers are outside. Red and I have been having the fun of our lives roping and gagging them, one after another. Crickets, Jerry, I wish you could have been in on it! Red called them out and I took them in hand and held them while he put on the ropes and gags. Teamwork, eh?"

Here freckle-face strutted into the cave.

"Did Peg tell you?" he grinned at me.

I nodded, sort of dizzy in the whirl of things.

"Where's Scoop?" I gasped, mindful all of a sudden of our leader's absence.

"Collecting," Peg said broadly, grinning.

"'Collecting'?" I repeated, staring at him. "Collecting what?"

"Rowboats," he added, in the same broad way.

I didn't understand.

"It wouldn't do us any good to escape from the island," he explained, "if we left a boat be-

hind. For the killer would then take after us."

"You've seen him?" I cried.

"Sure thing," Red put in.

"We saw him land in his boat," Peg picked up. "And, as you hadn't come into sight, Red and I followed him, to help you in case he tackled you. We saw him switch you into the cave. And we would have rushed to your rescue if the Strickers hadn't come into sight. While we were debating what to do, the man came out of the cave and disappeared in the direction of his boat. Now was our chance, we said. And we got busy."

"Guess we worked it pretty slick, hey?" Red bragged on himself.

"I'll tell the world you did," I cried. "But let's get out of here," I added quickly. "For the killer is liable to be back at any moment."

Outside I was treated to a sight of the enemy, each one gagged with his own handkerchief and tied; wrists and ankles, with the ropes of the flattened tent.

"How do you like it?" I purred, looking down at Bid in warm triumph.

"Um-m-m-m-m!" he returned, chewing his gag.

"Untie the handkerchiefs," Peg directed, starting to work. "For we should worry how loud they yell now. Our work's done."

While he and Red removed the gags I ran up the hill. For it had come to me suddenly that I had dropped my borrowed pants at the spot where the turtle had nabbed me.

"I don't know whose pants they are," I told the Strickers upon my return, "but here's a night-shirt for the unlucky one. So long, Biddie ol' dear! The next time you see a ghost you want to talk pretty to it and then it won't harm you."

Well, we scooted in the direction of the south shore, where it had been arranged that the leader was to wait for us with his collection of rowboats. On the way to the water I more than half expected to have the killer jump on us. But we saw nothing of him. Nor have we, for that matter, seen anything of him to this day. The Strickers tell the story that he came back to the cave, setting them free. Then he vanished. And it was well for him, I might add, that he did vanish. For the law was on the lookout for him the following day.

Scoop, in waiting for us off shore, had a string of four rowboats, the girl's, which he and its owner were in, the Strickers' two and the killer's one, which we learned later was the lock tender's. Anchoring the three towed boats a thousand feet

or so from the island, where they would be discovered in the daylight, we started for home.

Coming to the channel we heard, behind us, the echoing beat of a gasoline engine. A boat was coming down the canal from the direction of the lock where we had been held prisoners. At first we detected nothing distinctive in the engine's sounds. But it wasn't many seconds before our red-headed engineer tumbled to the truth of the matter.

"It's the *Sally Ann!*" he yipped, crazy.

The *Sally Ann!* Peg and I and Scoop stared at one another in stupefaction. It couldn't be our boat, we said.

But it was.

We waited, in trembling suspense, until the scow overtook us. At sight of the tillerman I gave a gasp. The white-haired thief! The man who had tried to murder his wealthy brother!

Was *he* the "friendly ghost"?

"Grandfather!" the girl cried, standing up in the rowboat and stretching out her hands to the aged man at the tiller. "Grandfather!"

CHAPTER XX

THE MYSTERY CLEARS

My story, in a way, really ends at this point, for we had no further adventures between the big wide waters and home.

Tired as we were, we experienced a lively thrill at sight of the grain elevator and the other towering landmarks in our home town. A number of people came running to the canal dock when they heard our organ, which we had switched on to triumphantly announce the arrival of the conquering heroes, so to speak.

After all of the very brave things that I had done, it wouldn't have been displeasing to me if the town band had turned out to welcome me, sort of. I had already made up my mind that I wouldn't try to keep my name out of the Tutter newspaper.

Dad was one of the first ones to arrive at the dock when we drew up. As can be imagined he got his eyes on my bandaged foot right away. And when I had told him what had happened to

me, he rushed me up town to Doc Leland's office, where an X-ray picture was taken of the injured part, to learn if any bones had been broken. An hour later, when Mother was washing hard on my ears, old Doc telephoned to the house that the bones were all right; my foot would be as good as ever, he predicted, in a few days.

Well, I wish you could have seen the amazement pictured in my parents' faces when I dragged my roll of money out of my pocket and told them the complete story of our exciting adventure.

"A 'friendly ghost,' " Dad laughed, in the conclusion of my recital. "You didn't think it was a real ghost, did you?"

"Well," I admitted, sort of sheepish, "I did at the start."

"There is no such thing as a ghost."

"I know that," I waggled. "But just the same, if I were to meet a white thing in a dark cemetery, and it jumped at me, I'd run it an awful foot race."

"The fear of ghosts, even as no such thing exists, is born in people," Mother spoke up, finishing one ear and starting in on the other one. "So I can imagine just how Jerry felt. . . . Quit jerking your head!"

"Mr. Garber has an awfully queer voice," I

went on, blinking to keep the soapy wash rag out of my eyes. "He sort of talks out of his shoes. So it isn't to be wondered at that we mistook him for a whispering ghost. Even when I knew he wasn't a ghost, I sort of shivered to hear him talk."

There was a thoughtful look on Dad's face.

"I've often seen your old gentleman rowing up and down the canal. I wondered who he was."

"He isn't quite right," I said, tapping the side of my head.

Mother drew a sharp breath.

"I should think not!" she put in quickly, screwing the wash rag into my ear. "The idea of sending a twelve-year-old girl on an errand such as that! The poor child! The wonder to me is that she wasn't frightened out of her senses."

I grinned.

"Mr. Garber wants me to come over and see him when my foot gets well."

"I'll feel safer if you keep away from him."

"He's a nice old gentleman," I defended, "even if he is kind of queer, with a graveyard voice. Besides," and here I winked at Dad under the flipping end of the wash rag, "the invitation comes from Lizzie, too."

"Nonsense!" Mother sputtered, picking at a

spot on the back of my neck with her finger nail.

"Tell me again," Dad said, "about the 'friendly ghost.' I didn't quite catch on from your story how the old gentleman worked it."

I complied, explaining how Mr. Garber had been in Tutter on business the afternoon when we had chased the Strickers away from our boat. Starting for home in the evening, in his rowboat, he had been driven under the bridge by the storm. The rowboat had contained a white oilcloth, used in rainy weather, to keep the boat dry, and he had wrapped this about his shoulders like a shawl. Coming to our scow he had heard the Strickers on board telling how they were going to smash up our stuff. Having seen us hard at work that afternoon, and realizing how we would feel in the loss of our stuff, he had boarded the scow from the canal to drive the others away. With his dripping white hair and white shawl he had looked not unlike a ghost, and at sight of him the Strickers had run away in fright. The following day, on another rowboat trip to Tutter, he had overheard us talking about him, calling him the "friendly ghost," so, when given another chance to help us, having detected the Strickers' rope, he had signed the note in fun with the name that we had given him.

Dad laughed at the conclusion of my long explanation.

"*Some* adventure, I'll tell the world!"

Well, to wind up my story, I will further explain that the girl's grandfather and uncle were twin brothers, so much alike in appearance that the gardener never had suspected that the injured man that he had found in a pool of blood on the kitchen floor was his employer's brother, struck down by his evil companion, and not the retired banker, himself. Nor had the police suspected the truth of the matter. As for us, never having seen the grandfather to know him, it wasn't surprising, in the moment of his appearance in charge of the scow, that we had mistaken him for the other man.

But the girl knew that the tillerman was her grandfather and not her uncle. And you should have seen the way she flew into the old gentleman's arms when we boarded the big boat.

The story that the unnerved grandparent gave us in his emotional reunion with the younger relative was rather vague and sketchy. And to this day I don't know whether, in his wild flight from the log house, he knew that his brother had been struck down or not. However, that is not an important point.

Coming to the big wide waters shortly after we had rowed to shore with the brass box, he had seen our swinging lantern climb to the island's summit. Frightened to a point of collapse in his advanced age by the night's preceding events, he was now further unnerved by our presence on the island. The crazy idea came to him that we had *dug up* the bonds that the granddaughter (so he thought) had earlier buried. And to be near the bonds, with a view of secretly recovering them, he had hid on our boat, under the rear deck, and was there in the time of our trip into Steam Corners and back to the lock.

It was his drifting rowboat that Scoop and I had seen that morning when we went to the *Sally Ann* to get the stuff for breakfast. Further, it was the old gentleman's footfalls that we had heard in our approach of the scow. And now that it is known that he was hidden under the deck where our food was kept, the mystery of the vanished ham is explained.

Lizzie had told us that her rascally uncle, on another visit to his wealthy brother's home, had stolen a lot of the latter's money. In fear of being caught with the money the thief had hidden it in a hollow leg of his brother's old-fashioned piano, intending to return for the greenbacks later

on. And we know that he *did* return for the money, after an elapse of nearly three years, bringing with him a man as evil-minded as himself. Whether or not the piano tuner knew of the money's exact hiding place before coming to the log house never will be known to us. For the uncle kept a still tongue in his scheming head in the time that he was in the hospital; and as soon as he was discharged he quickly disappeared. But I have always held to the thought that the piano tuner found out about the money's hiding place that night in the kitchen. That may have been the cause of his attack on the other—his decision, I mean, to recover the money himself. However, *we* got to the piano ahead of either of the two law breakers, as I have related. And the money was properly turned over to its rightful owner.

In refurnishing his summer home, shortly after the theft and the subsequent secretion of the greenbacks, the banker had sold his old-fashioned piano to his gardener; and later the gardener had been appointed to the position of tender at the Steam Corners lock.

Well acquainted with the lock tender, the banker, in a return of his main senses, had settled for the destroyed sheets, thereby gaining the release of our show boat, in which he had started

for the island. How we had met him in the channel I already have described.

He had secured the "release" of my pants, too, as well as the show boat. And when I ran my hands into the pockets, there was our show money and my own eight dollars. Not a penny missing.

In Ashton we had a long talk with the mayor about the greased-pig trick. And when he learned that the policeman had been playing poker, when he should have been in the street on duty, it was mister blue jacket who got into trouble, let me tell you, and not us.

We hesitated to accept the two-hundred-dollar reward; for we didn't want the girl to think that we had helped her in the thought of getting pay for our work. But the mayor said firmly that we *had* to take the money—the reward had been publicly posted, he explained, and consequently had to be paid. So we took it.

Back in Tutter again, we gave a sort of jubilee performance on the first night of our return, only I wasn't of much help with my lame foot. We took in nine dollars and sixty cents. Everybody admitted that we had been very brave and Mr. Stair coaxed me to let him put my name in his newspaper. One of the big Chicago newspapers told about me, too, in eight or ten lines. It was

very pleasing to me to read about myself. The other fellows were mentioned in the article.

Following the jubilee performance I made out a report of our show business, which showed how much money had been taken in and how much had been paid out. Here is a copy of the report:

Working capital advanced	$30.00	Engine	$3.00
Ticket sales	26.60	Organ	2.00
Reward	200.00	Shaft	.50
		Tickets	1.00
Total money received	$256.60	Advertising	5.00
Expenses (subtract)	16.50	Food	1.00
		Handbills	3.00
		Oil	1.00
Balance on hand	$240.10		
Each one's share	$60.02½	Total expenses	$16.50

You can see from these figures that our boat show was a big success. And we are not without hope that some day our parents will let us start out again.

Mother declares, though, that if we *do* revive our boat show that she is going to make it her business to go along with me with a wash rag and a cake of toilet soap.

She never will get over telling the neighbors, I guess, what dirty ears I came home with.

THE END

BOOKS BY LEO EDWARDS

ILLUSTRATED. EVERY VOLUME COMPLETE IN ITSELF.

Hundreds of thousands of boys and girls have laughed until their sides ached over the weird and wonderful adventures of Jerry Todd and Poppy Ott and their friends. Mr. Edwards' boy characters are real. They do the things other boys like. Pirates! Mystery! Detectives! Adventure! Ghosts! Buried Treasure! Achievement! Stories of boys making things, doing things, going places—always on the jump and always having fun. His stories are for boys and girls of all ages.

THE JERRY TODD BOOKS

JERRY TODD AND THE WHISPERING MUMMY
JERRY TODD AND THE ROSE-COLORED CAT
JERRY TODD AND THE OAK ISLAND TREASURE
JERRY TODD AND THE WALTZING HEN
JERRY TODD AND THE TALKING FROG
JERRY TODD AND THE PURRING EGG
JERRY TODD IN THE WHISPERING CAVE
JERRY TODD: PIRATE
JERRY TODD AND THE BOB-TAILED ELEPHANT
JERRY TODD: EDITOR-IN-GRIEF
JERRY TODD: CAVEMAN
JERRY TODD AND THE FLYING FLAPDOODLE
JERRY TODD AND THE BUFFALO BILL BATHTUB

THE POPPY OTT BOOKS

POPPY OTT AND THE STUTTERING PARROT
POPPY OTT'S SEVEN LEAGUE STILTS
POPPY OTT AND THE GALLOPING SNAIL
POPPY OTT'S PEDIGREED PICKLES
POPPY OTT AND THE FRECKLED GOLDFISH
POPPY OTT AND THE TITTERING TOTEM
POPPY OTT AND THE PRANCING PANCAKE
POPPY OTT HITS THE TRAIL

GROSSET & DUNLAP *Publishers* NEW YORK

TALES OF ADVENTURE IN THE GREAT NORTHWEST

By JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

THE GRIZZLY KING

The story of Thor, the biggest grizzly in the Rockies, and the hunter who pursued but never shot him.

NOMADS OF THE NORTH

Neewa, the bear cub, and Miki, the pup, separated from their master, grow up in the wilderness until, in the end, they find him and bring to him the girl he loves.

SWIFT LIGHTNING

The adventures of a wolf in whose veins is a drop of dog blood. His desperate combats and killings, and his mating with a lost collie make a tale of breathless suspense.

THE WOLF HUNTERS

A tenderfoot, a young Indian and their faithful guide battle courageously with a savage band of outlaw Indians in the Canadian wilderness.

THE GOLD HUNTERS

A search for a lost gold mine leads the three heroes of "The Wolf Hunters" on a hazardous trail of mystery and amazing adventure.

BACK TO GOD'S COUNTRY

The courage and devotion of Wapi, the wolf dog, saves the life of a woman imprisoned on an ice-bound ship in the Far North.

THE GOLDEN SNARE

Philip Raine, of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, taken prisoner by the murderer he is pursuing, finds strange adventure with a half-mad wolf-man, a beautiful girl and a courageous Swede.

GROSSET & DUNLAP *Publishers* NEW YORK

THRILLING ADVENTURES IN THE GREAT WEST

TROUBLE RANCH
by George M. Johnson

"P. D. Q." had a weakness for seeing fair play — and he backed it up with his fists as well as his .45.

RIDING THE RANGE
by Lawrence A. Keating

Brad Corlis obeyed a mysterious voice in the dark until he came to the end of the trail of vengeance—and got his man.

RIDERS OF THE TRAIL
by George M. Johnson

His defense of an unknown girl started Wally on a trail of danger, adventure and romance

THE LONGHORN TRAIL
by Hamilton Craigie

Fear rode the range while the three-cornered war of the cattle barons raged around Branding Iron.

THE CREED OF THE RANGE
by Col. George B. Rodney

How Latigo Jones thwarted the schemes of the Nighthawks and at long last won back his ranch and his girl.

PEACE RIVER JUSTICE
by Lawrence A. Keating

A reward is posted for his capture "dead or alive" and Bronk Patterson takes to his guns to win through a long, hard fight to save his ranch.

THE CORONADO TRAIL
by Colonel George B. Rodney

The storied jewel of the Aztecs leads young Jim Leavitt on a path of danger and strange adventure.

GROSSET & DUNLAP *Publishers* NEW YORK

There is the high, happy spirit of youth in these famous

BOOKS FOR GIRLS

by JANE D. ABBOTT

APRILLY

The charming story of a young girl, child of the circus, and the adventures which led to her goal of happiness.

HIGHACRES

A school story of Jerry Travis and her chum Gyp Westley. A thread of romance and mystery in Jerry's life runs through the tale.

KEINETH

How Keineth Randolph kept a secret—a war secret—for a whole year makes one of the best stories ever written for girls.

RED ROBIN

In attempting to bring happiness into the lives of mill workers, Robin Forsythe, heir to a fortune, has many strange adventures.

HEYDAY

Twenty-three! The heyday of life. Jay, a small town girl, finds happiness in New York.

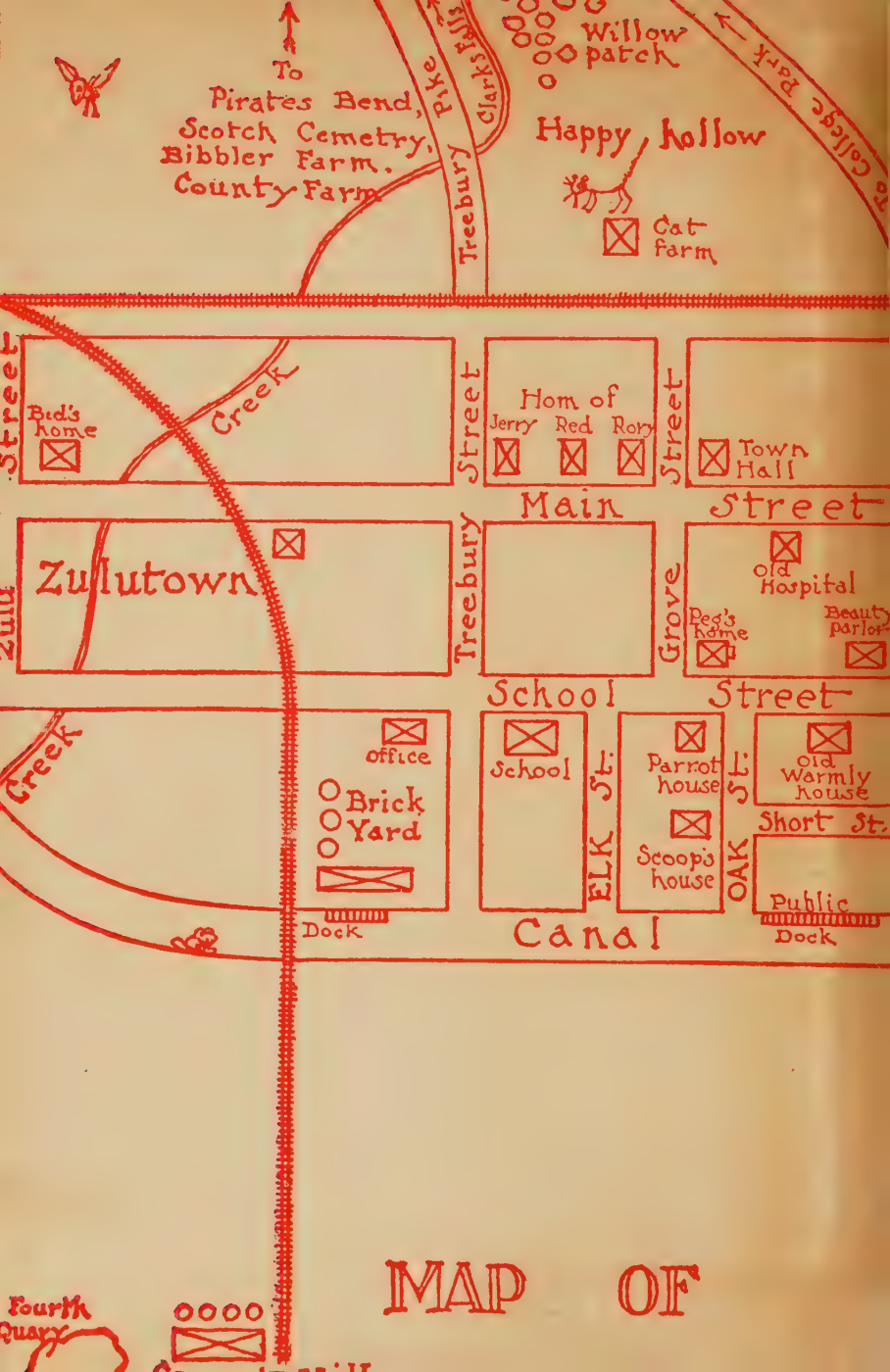
LARKSPUR

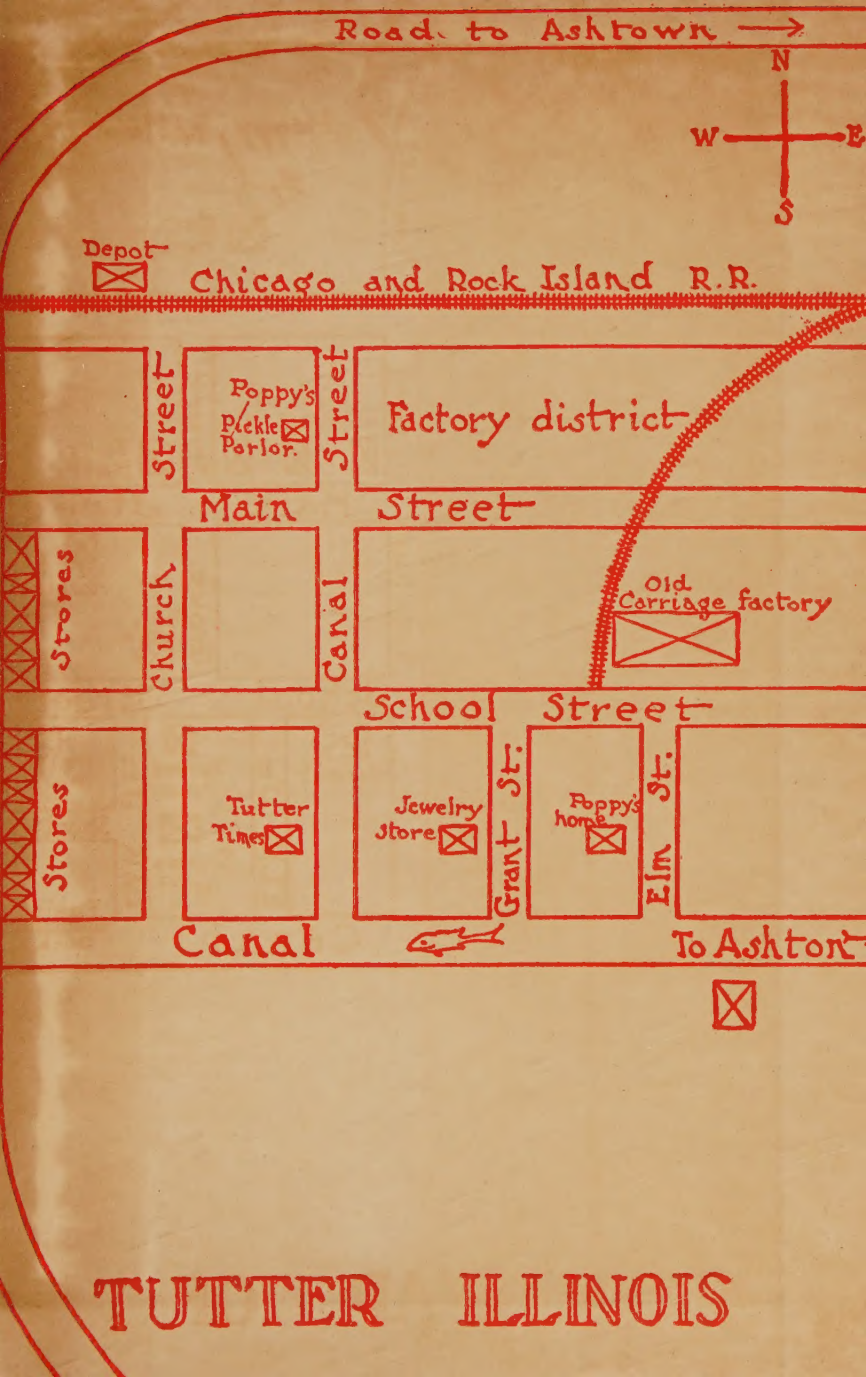
Especially interesting to any Girl Scout because it is the story of a Girl Scout who is poor and has to help her mother.

HAPPY HOUSE

How an old family quarrel is healed through a misunderstanding and an old homestead becomes a "happy house" in reality.

GROSSET & DUNLAP *Publishers* NEW YORK


To
Pirates Bend,
Scotch Cemetry,
Bibbler Farm.
County Farm
Pike
Clarks Falls
Treebury
Willow patch
Happy Hollow
Cat farm
To College Park
Bid's home
Creek
Street
Hom of
Jerry Red Rory
Street
Town Hall
Main Street
Zululutown
Zulu
Treebury
Grove
Old Hospital
Peg's home
Beauty parlor
School Street
Creek
office
Brick Yard
Dock
School
ELK St.
Parrot house
Scoopi's house
OAK St.
Old Warmly house
Short St.
Public Dock
Canal
MAP OF
Fourth Quarry


Road to Ashtown
N
W
E
S
Depot
Chicago and Rock Island R.R.
Street
Poppy's pickle Parlor.
Street
Factory district
Main Street
Stores
Church
Canal
Old Carriage factory
School Street
Stores
Tutter Times
Jewelry Store
Grant St.
Poppy's home
Elm St.
Canal
To Ashton
TUTTER ILLINOIS

The Famous

Jerry Todd Series

by LEO EDWARDS

author of the
POPPY OTT BOOKS

Jerry Todd and the Whispering Mummy

Jerry Todd and the Rose-Colored Cat

Jerry Todd and the Oak Island Treasure

Jerry Todd and the Waltzing Hen

Jerry Todd and the Talking Frog

Jerry Todd and the Purring Egg

Jerry Todd in the Whispering Cave

Jerry Todd: Pirate

Jerry Todd and the Bob-Tailed Elephant

Jerry Todd; Editor-in-Grief

Jerry Todd, Caveman

Jerry Todd and the Flying Flapdoodle

Jerry Todd and the Buffalo Bill Bathtub

GROSSET & DUNLAP, INC.
NEW YORK

Is Johnny Studying His Lesson?

Oh, no! He's giggling his way through a Leo Edwards Book. And if Mum doesn't put the light out, the chances are he'll keep on reading until he comes to the final hilarious climax. Mr. Edwards' boy characters are all real. They do the things other boys like. Pirates! Mystery! Detectives! Adventure! Ghosts! Buried Treasure! Achievement! Stories of boys making things, doing things, going places — always on the jump and always having fun. His stories are for boys and girls of all ages.

THE JERRY TODD BOOKS

JERRY TODD AND THE WHISPERING MUMMY
JERRY TODD AND THE ROSE-COLORED CAT
JERRY TODD AND THE OAK ISLAND TREASURE
JERRY TODD AND THE WALTZING HEN
JERRY TODD AND THE TALKING FROG
JERRY TODD AND THE PURRING EGG
JERRY TODD IN THE WHISPERING CAVE
JERRY TODD: PIRATE
JERRY TODD AND THE BOB-TAILED ELEPHANT
JERRY TODD: EDITOR-IN-GRIEF
JERRY TODD: CAVEMAN
JERRY TODD AND THE FLYING FLAPDOODLE
JERRY TODD AND THE BUFFALO BILL BATHTUB

THE POPPY OTT BOOKS

POPPY OTT AND THE STUTTERING PARROT
POPPY OTT'S SEVEN LEAGUE STILTS
POPPY OTT AND THE GALLOPING SNAIL
POPPY OTT'S PEDIGREED PICKLES
POPPY OTT AND THE FRECKLED GOLDFISH
POPPY OTT AND THE TITTERING TOTEM
POPPY OTT AND THE PRANCING PANCAKE
POPPY OTT HITS THE TRAIL

GROSSET & DUNLAP : *Publishers* : NEW YORK